

7 C. J. Loper

A
SHORT DEFENCE
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND:

ADDRESSED TO THE
INHABITANTS OF MIDDLETON CHENEY,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

SHORT DISTANCE
OF THE
CHURCH of ENGLAND:

ADDITIONAL TO THE
HISTORICAL COLLECTION
OF THE
BRITISH MUSEUM

A
SHORT DEFENCE
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND,

IN ANSWER TO THOSE FROM WHOM WE SEPARATED,
AND TO THOSE WHO SEPARATE FROM US :

ADDRESSED TO THE
INHABITANTS OF MIDDLETON CHENEY,
NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

BY RALPH CHURTON, M.A.
RECTOR OF THAT PARISH, AND LATE FELLOW OF
BRASEN NOSE COLLEGE, OXFORD.

Prove all things ; hold fast that which is good. 1 Theff. v. 21.

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SHORT DEFENCE
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND

IN ANSWER TO THOSE FROM WHOM WE SEPARATED
AND TO THOSE WHO SEPARATE FROM US:

IMPRIMATUR,

ADDRESSED TO THE

JOHAN. WILLS,
VICE-CAN. OXON.

WADH. COLL.
3th Julii, 1795.

BY RALPH CHURTON, M.A.
RECTOR OF THE CHURCH OF ST. MARTIN, VINEYARD, LONDON.



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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following pages were put together with no other view, than what the title-page expresses, for the immediate use of Those, whom it has pleased God to commit to my care. But one or two highly esteemed Friends, to whose perusal the manuscript was submitted, having entertained hopes, that a tract of this kind might be of service beyond the limits of a single Parish, it is now, in compliance with Their wishes, laid before the Public. To those, especially my Parishioners, who may be disposed to consider what is here offered, I have one and only one request to make ;—which I would willingly press with the earnestness of a man anxious for Their salvation ;—that, before they sit down to read this short discourse, they would privately and devoutly beseech Almighty God, through Jesus Christ, to enlighten their minds to see the truth, and incline their hearts to embrace and hold it fast. If they are already in the right way, there is no fear left by such

a

a prayer

a prayer they should be perverted, and led into error. But if, in any respect, their present notions are imperfect or ill-founded ; if there is room for information, or need of correction ; the Father of mercies may, in reward of their fervent supplication, blefs, to their benefit, the humblest means intended for their good.

MIDDLETON CHENEY,
JUNE 29. 1795.

R. CHURTON.



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[2]

SHORT DEFENCE

OF THE

CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

Introduction and Division of the Subject.

“ **I**N Christianity,” says an excellent writer, “ there can be no concerning truth which is not ancient ; and whatsoever is truly new, is certainly false ^a.” Upon this principle, those great and good men who reformed our Church, taking the word of God and primitive antiquity for their guides, rejected those errors and corruptions, which, during a succession of dark and ignorant ages, had been introduced into the Christian faith

^a Pearson on the Creed, Dedication.

and Christian worship. If they proceeded on good grounds in what they discarded and in what they retained, their justification is complete. Let us consider the matter under both these heads, humbly beseeching the Author and Giver of all wisdom to bless and direct us through Jesus Christ to the knowledge of the truth.

CHURCH of ENGLAND.

Principles and Doctrines of the Church of England.
 "In Christianity," says an excellent writer, "there can be no compromising truth which is not ancient; and whatsoever is truly new is certainly false." Upon this principle, those great and good men who reformed our Church, taking the word of God and primitive authority for their guides, rejected those errors and superstitions which, during a succession of dark and ignorant ages, had been introduced into the Christian faith.

and

PART

PART I.

ANSWER TO THOSE FROM WHOM WE
SEPARATED.

CHAPTER I.

On the holy Scriptures.

§ 1. ALL Christians, however they may differ about other points, acknowledge and appeal to the holy Scriptures; and these Scriptures plainly teach and assert their own sufficiency for the great purpose of salvation. Our blessed Lord assuredly “had,” and taught “the words of eternal life^b ;” and one of his gracious promises to his apostles was, “The Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you^c.” And again, on the same subject, he declared, “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth^d.” The benefit of these promises the apostles doubtless enjoyed as well when they wrote, as when they

^b John vi. 68.

^c Ib. xiv. 26.

^d Ib. xvi. 13.

preached, the gospel. And therefore St. John thus speaks of that Gospel which he penned: "These" things "are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name^e." If this Gospel separately is adequate to this the express design for which it was composed, it must be more amply so when taken in conjunction with the other Three. And if to these we add the Acts of the Apostles, together with the other books of the Old and New Testament, this whole volume of holy writ cannot but be still more abundantly sufficient for all the essential purposes of belief and practice. Accordingly St. Paul testifies, that "The holy Scriptures are able to make" us "wise unto salvation;" and he declares at once their inspiration and their use, in the memorable words that follow: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works^f."

Our church then is warranted by the clear authority of Scripture, in rejecting those tra-

^e John xx. 31.

^f 2 Tim. iii. 15—17.

ditions,

ditions, which, where they are received, have, in later days, as of old, too often “ made the word of God of none effect^e;” and is authorised in maintaining, in opposition to such fallacious rule, that “ Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of the faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation^h.” What is in direct words declared in Scripture is or may be “ read therein:” as, “ The Lord our God is one Lordⁱ:” there is “ one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus^k.” But what is not thus literally asserted in Scripture may nevertheless be contained therein as to matter and sense, and may therefore, by fair and just consequence, be “ proved thereby.” For instance, we do not read in the New Testament that the Holy Ghost proceedeth from the Son; but since he is called the Spirit of the Son, and is said to be *sent by* the Son, by which evidently procession is signified, therefore the Nicene fathers were justified in declaring, and we in believing, that the Holy

^e Mark vii. 13.

ⁱ Mark xii. 29.

^h Article vi.

^k 1 Tim. ii. 5.

Ghost “ proceedeth from the Father *and the Son.*”

§ 2. If the holy Scriptures are essential to salvation, it follows, that, agreeably to what they themselves so often teach and injoin, they should be carefully read by all; and consequently that the people should have free access to them in a language which they understand. Here indeed good sense has at length prevailed, and our brethren of the Romish communion in this country are generally, I believe and hope, allowed the use of an English Bible. It is much to be lamented, that part only of the evil is removed; and that the public service, in their congregations, is still performed in a dead language. A translation indeed is now, I believe, commonly permitted; by which the absurdity of the custom is tacitly acknowledged, while, unhappily, the practice remains as before.

Not to urge at present the manifest reason and propriety of the thing, it is truly wonderful that whoever reads St. Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians should not perceive how repugnant this practice is to what he there teaches: “ If I pray,” that is join in prayer as one of the congregation, as appears from
what

what follows; "If I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou" (the officiating minister) "shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified¹."

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 14—17. See the whole passage, from verse 2 to 28.

CHAPTER II.

On Transubstantiation and Saint-worship.

§ 1. BUT Transubstantiation alone, were there no other error in the church of Rome, would have made it necessary to leave her communion. This strange doctrine overturns the very nature of a sacrament. For if transubstantiation is true, the elements are no longer visible signs of something invisible and spiritual ; but the symbol or sign is transmuted and changed into the thing signified. The Lord's supper, according to the words of the institution, is to be celebrated " in remembrance^m" of Christ ; and remembrance necessarily implies the absence of the thing remembered. But here, if what some say be true, remembrance is impossible. Here is no sensible representation of a blessed body once visible on earth, now exalted to heaven ; but the wafer, what was the wafer, is literally that very same body present before our eyes.

It is true our blessed Lord said, " This is

^m Luke xxii. 19.

my body;" but so, on another occasion, he said, " I am the door^a;" and again, " I am the vine^o;" and we may as well take his words literally in one case as the other. Scarcely any mode of speech is more common in Scripture, than to say, that the type or figure is that which it stands for or represents: " The vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant^p:" " The good seed are the children of the kingdom;" " the reapers are the angels^r:" " This Agar is mount Sinai^s."

Our blessed Lord's miracles were appeals to the senses of those who were present; so that, for instance, when he turned water into wine, the very same sight, the same taste, that proved what was put into the pots was water, proved also that what was drawn out of the pots was wine^t. But here a similar and equally miraculous change is effected, though our senses all the while attest there is no change at all. Nay more, there are two miracles, as it has been justly observed, and one of them is wrought to defeat the other. For the elements are first of all converted into the real body and blood of

^a John x. 9.

^o John xv. 5.

^p Isai. v. 7.

^r Matth. xiii. 38, 39.

^s Gal. iv. 25.

^t John ii.

Christ;

Christ ; and then by a second miracle our senses are imposed upon, and what is verily flesh seems by every trial we can make to be bread as before : as St. Paul clearly calls it after it has been consecrated :

Nor is this strange notion of the Eucharist only repugnant to plain sense and to the word of God ; it has also given rise to many superstitions. One of these is the adoration of the host^u ; which, if this doctrine is not true, appears to be little better than absolute idolatry. For it is giving to a creature, a bit of bread or a wafer, the worship due alone to the Almighty Creator.

§ 2. THERE are two kinds of idolatry forbidden by the second commandment and other parts of holy Scripture. The first is making any image or likeness whatsoever of the Almighty ; the other is paying divine worship, either with or without an image, to any real creature or imaginary being. It is very difficult to acquit the church we relinquished of either of these grievous errors.

^t 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. xi. 26. So likewise our Lord calls the cup “the fruit of the vine.” Matth. xxvi. 29.

^u Hostia or the Host means a Victim, and is a name applicable to this sacrament only on the supposition that it is a real sacrifice of the body of Christ.

They

They allow their painters and sculptors to represent the Eternal Father, "whom no man hath seen, nor can see"; who is a pure Spirit, every where present, and filleth all things. And in the homage which they offer to the blessed Virgin and other saints, it seems impossible to say they are clear of the other, and, if possible, still grosser idolatry.

It is true they say the respect does not terminate in the material image, is not tendered to it, but through it to the Being represented. The very same, doubtless, any idolatrous Jew or Pagan would have said in defence of their worship. When Aaron had made the calf, the Israelites said, "These be thy Gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." The most stupid among them could not possibly believe that the image of gold, which was not made till that day, was the very Being, who had some months before brought them out of Egypt. They meant, it was a symbol or representation of that Being; and so did Aaron, when he made an altar before it, and said, "To-morrow is a feast to the LORD"; to Jehovah the true and living God.

^w 1 Tim. vi. 16. with John i. 18.

^x Exod. xxxii. 4, 5.

Jeroboam's wickedness, for which he is for ever branded as having made Israel to sin, was precisely the same. He represented God by an image, and that, like Aaron's, a golden calf or ox. The introduction of false gods was the sin, whereof Ahab was guilty; which is carefully distinguished from that of Jeroboam, and spoken of as still more heinous: For "as if it was a light thing for him to walk in the sins of Jeroboam,—he went—and served Baal^y."

But the invocation of the blessed Virgin and other saints, we are told, is not praying to them, but only desiring them to pray for us. Admit this for a moment. The practice is then, like that which the apostle condemns, "a voluntary humility and worship^z," warranted by no precept, countenanced by no example, in the Old or New Testament. This however is by no means the whole or the worst part of the case. For were I even certain (which I never can be without an express revelation to assure me) that the saint whom I address hears the words I utter, or knows the secret aspirations of my heart, is it credible or conceivable that the

^y 1 Kings xvi. 31. Comp. 2 Kings viii. 18. 27. xxi. 3.
^z Chron. xxi. 13. xxii. 3, 4.

^z Col. ii. 18.

same faint hears the vows of ten thousand other suplicants, poured forth at the same instant in different parts of the earth? Is this possible, unless the faint possesses the incommunicable attributes of God, is every where present, and knows all things? We are not ignorant of what is said in behalf of this; but it is only an attempt to establish one position that requires proof by another that requires proof, with this disadvantage, that, as we apprehend, it never can be proved; for it is not taught in Scripture, and is repugnant to reason.

But we concede, I fear, more than can justly be claimed, if we grant that they do not, in the strictest sense, pray to saints departed. They used certainly to implore of the blessed Virgin help, and protection, and salvation. And when, as the custom still is abroad, a person suspends a taper before the image of the holy Virgin or some other faint, and then falling down on his knees, with his hands elevated and his eyes fixt on the image, utters a formal prayer, this surely is solemn adoration. It is rendering to the statue that homage which would not be due to the faint himself, were he personally present; that reverence which the beloved disciple would have paid to the angel, had he not been forbidden.

bidden^a. It is, in short, honouring the creature, or the image of the creature, equally with the Creator; for there is no posture *more devout* than kneeling, wherewith I can present myself before the living God: "O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come^b."

It is not necessary to speak of the doctrines of Purgatory, of Prayers for the Dead, of Indulgences, and many more; nor to inquire whether what we have stated are the tenets of those who adhere in the present day to the church of Rome. With the opinions of individuals we do not interfere. The public service and rituals are the same as heretofore, and transubstantiation is still considered as an indispensable bond of union. As we were compelled therefore to leave, so are we obliged to keep aloof from, this church; nor are We guilty of schism in breaking off from their society, but They of heresy in corrupting the pure doctrines of the primitive ages, and imposing sinful terms of communion.

^a Rev. xix. 10. xxii. 8; 9.

^b Psal. lxxv. 2.

PART II.

ANSWER TO THOSE WHO SEPARATE FROM
US.*Introduction and Division of this Part of the
Subject.*

BUT some are not satisfied with what we have done, and complain that our church has still too great a resemblance of popery. To this we might reply, that we have not one doctrine, and scarcely one usage or ceremony, that can properly be called popish; since the matters alleged as such may be traced to a higher origin, and are conformable to the customs of churches that existed long before the earliest corruptions of popery. But if whatever is found in the church of Rome is for that sole reason to be rejected, we must at this rate reject the holy Scriptures themselves; for they are held and believed by papists as well as by protestants. The proper inquiry is, whether the particular things, at which offence is taken, are in themselves wrong, or repugnant to the word of
God

God and the custom of the primitive church. If in this view we consider the blessed Sacraments, the prescribed Liturgy, and the Persons who preside over the church and perform the sacred offices, nothing that is material to this part of our defence will probably be overlooked.

CHAPTER I.

On the Sacrament of Baptism; of its necessary parts and manner of administration; and of Infant Baptism.

§ 1. THE origin of Baptism is not certainly known. It had long been in use among the Jews before the time of our blessed Saviour, as one of the ceremonies performed in the admission of proselytes. The males on this occasion they circumcised; but they baptized all, both young and old, male and female^c, sometimes by immersion, and sometimes by affusion, or pouring water with the hand upon the body^d. And their doctrine was, that those who were thus received into a new state were born anew; and they were probably led both to use the ceremony, and to put this construction upon it, because washing with water was the first thing done to infants in the day they were born^e. And for the same reason washing the body with

^c See Hammond on Matth. iii. 1. Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, Lightfoot, vol. i. 210, 225, &c. He derives the rite of baptism from Jacob, vol. i. 465. ii. 117.

^d Mischna de Sabb. c. xix. § 3.

^e Ezek. xvi. 4.

water was understood also among the Gentiles as a symbol of a new or second birth^f. To this rite, and this interpretation of it, our blessed Lord is with great probability supposed to allude in his discourse with Nicodemus, when he expressed his surprise that he, “a master of Israel,” did not understand, from the current doctrine of Israel, that a man, though not literally, might nevertheless in a religious and moral sense, be born again^g.

This known ceremony John the Baptist used; and therefore when the Jews, sent for that purpose, questioned him on the subject, they shewed no surprise at the practice as a novelty; but inquired only concerning his authority for baptizing, expecting, as seems likely, that Christ when he came would baptize, and doubting from that circumstance whether John were not the Christ^h.

§ 2. THUS circumstances stood in regard to this rite, when the Son of God, having himself been baptized by John in Jordan, adopted baptism as the mode of admission into his church; and after his resurrection he

^f See Wheatley on the Com. Prayer, c. vii.

^g John iii. 10.

^h John i. 25. Compare Luke iii. 15, 16.

gave commandment to his disciples to go and baptize all nations; and in order to shew that what he enjoined was to be a standing and perpetual ordinance, he added, "Lo, I am with you alway," with you and your successors, to give effect to your word and ministration, "even unto the end of the world¹."

The prescribed form of words shews that this sacrament is a rite of initiation: "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The relation therefore, which these words imply, does not subsist till that holy name is thus solemnly pronounced over and applied to us by the appointed minister. "I enlist you," says the military commander, "in his Majesty's *name*:" "I take possession of this town or this garrison in the *name* of George the Third." We are not soldiers of Jesus Christ till we are received by his servant under his banner. We can only through Christ call God our Father; for our title as sons by creation we forfeited by rebellion. But "as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ^k;" and being adopted in the

¹ Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. The first of these verses is more particularly considered—p. 31. § 10.

^k Gal. iii. 27.

Beloved, have thenceforth liberty and boldness to cry “ Abba, Father¹.”

§ 3. THE Law was a Covenant which the Almighty vouchsafed to make with the children of Israel by the mediation of Moses. The Gospel is a Covenant made with all mankind by the mediation of Christ. A covenant, in its general nature, implies mutual obligations and mutual benefits. But in the instances before us, on account of the infinite distance between the covenanting parties, and because to the ever-blessed Creator no possible advantage can redound from the creature, a language somewhat different is necessary; and we say, the Old and New Covenant consisted of Promises on the one side, and Duties on the other. If I enter into a covenant, I take upon me the burdens and have a claim to the privileges, which regularly belong to it. If I am incorporated into a city, or made free of a state, I bind myself to the duties, and am invested with the franchises, of a subject or citizen. He that entered into the Mosaic covenant by the rite of circumcision, as he enjoyed the advantage of the law, so was he a debtor to do the law^m.

¹ Rom. viii. 15. Gal. iv. 6.

^m Gal. v. 3. with Rom. ii. 25. iii. 1, 2.

He that by baptism is admitted into the Christian covenant is intitled to the benefits, and bound to perform the terms, of that dispensation. The benefits are pardon of sins, the aid of the Holy Spirit, and the promise of everlasting life; the terms or conditions of the covenant are faith and obedience.

§ 4. THIS important rite is represented under various figures or allusions. Perhaps the most obvious notion of it is that under which we have considered it, as the visible form of admission into Christ's church; and therefore answering to the sacrament of circumcision, in the room of which it succeeded. It is the sign or seal of the New Covenant, as that was of the Old^a. Hence St. Paul says, "As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ^b." And hence to baptize is used in the sense of initiating and confirming on other occasions^c.

As the sacrament whereby we are made members of Christ, it is, in virtue of His blessed promise and appointment, an instrument of salvation. "He that believeth and

^a See Rom. iv. 11. and compare Col. ii. 11, 12.

^b Gal. iii. 27.

^c See Acts i. 5. 1 Cor. x. 2.

is baptized, shall be saved^q,” are our Lord’s own words on this head. And St. Peter, speaking of Noah’s being saved in the ark by water, says, “ The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us^r,”

§ 5. BUT the original notion of baptism, as before observed, probably was, that it was a type or emblem of a new birth. And agreeably to this it is declared by our Lord and his apostles to be an instrument or means, whereby, the grace of the Holy Spirit accompanying the outward ordinance, our sins are done away, and we are regenerated or born to God. “ Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit,” our blessed Lord says, “ he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” Hence St. Peter exhorts the Jews, “ Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins.” And Ananias says to Paul, “ Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.” And Paul himself expressly calls baptism the washing of regeneration: “ According to his mercy he saved us by the

^q Mark xvi. 16.

^r 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21.

^s John iii. 5.

^t Acts ii. 38.

^u Acts xxii. 16.

washing

washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost *."

Other expressions of like import are applied to this subject. St. Paul wonders that the Galatians were "so soon removed unto another gospel;" he calls them "foolish," and rebukes them sharply for "not obeying the truth;" yet, notwithstanding this their deviation from the truth and want of obedience, he presently tells them, "Ye are *ALL the children of God* by faith in Jesus Christ. FOR as many of you as have been *baptized* into Christ, have put on Christ *." And he elsewhere says, referring no doubt to baptismal regeneration, "If any man be in Christ, he is *a new creature* *." And after careful examination I am satisfied, that wherever regeneration is mentioned in the New Testament, either by that appropriate term, or equivalent phrases, such as those above; if it denotes, as it often does, not the sincerity of heart and life becoming a Christian ^z, but the act

^w Tit. iii. 5. So Justin Martyr, who wrote about the year 140, calls the sacred font "*the laver of regeneration for the remission of sins.*" Apol. i. c. 86.

^x Gal. i. 6. iii. 1. 26, 27.

^y 2 Cor. v. 17.

^z The mistakes on this and many kindred subjects seem to arise entirely from overlooking the obvious distinction between the outward name or profession, and inward

act of our being regenerated, it always refers, by necessary or easy construction, to regeneration in baptism. The servant of Christ must forsake all sin. What is feeble must be strengthened; what is decayed must be renewed; but the spiritual birth, like the natural, is one only, and that in baptism. Hence we never find the apostles in their frequent addresses, by word or by epistle, to their brethren in Christ, telling them they must be born again; but our blessed Lord, as we have seen, insisted on the necessity of it; for he was then discoursing to Nicodemus, who had not been baptized.

§ 6. THE necessity of baptism from all this is very apparent. We do not say, for the Scripture does not say, that without this ordinance there is no salvation; but since remission of sins and salvation are so often and expressly attributed to baptism, it is assuredly,

sincerity. Thus we say, "You are not a *man*, or not a *Christian*, if you do so, or so;" that is, you do not act up to the character of the one or the other. And so St. Paul says, "He is not a Jew which is one outwardly;—but he is a Jew which is one inwardly." Rom. ii. 28, 29. Yet the nominal Jew was within the covenant, and intitled to the benefits of it, without repeating the rite of initiation; and the nominal Christian is a member of the Christian covenant, without being readmitted by baptism.

where

where it may be had, an indispensable rite, or, as our church says, “generally necessary to salvation^a.” In this sense our blessed Lord, in his discourse with Nicodemus, seems to make regeneration, and consequently the instrument of regeneration, a condition of salvation. But if “the kingdom of God^b” there signifies, as it generally does in the Gospels, the kingdom of Christ in this world; if that gracious state, that covenant of God with man is necessary, then the seal of that covenant, whereby it is ratified to us and we become actual members of it, must also be necessary. The denunciation against neglecting circumcision, the seal of the ancient covenant, was, that the soul that did so should be cut off from his people^c: which sentence was understood to reach the person himself, when he came to the age of thirteen years; but till then the sin lay at the parents’ door. And therefore when Moses neglected to circumcise his son, the Lord sought to kill not the child, but the father^d. Under the new covenant the obligation of that rite which answers to circumcision appears to be equally strong. When Paul had been miraculously

^a See the Catechism.

^c Gen. xvii. 14.

^b John iii. 3. 5.

^d Exod. iv. 24.

converted,

converted, and taught the gospel by revelation from heaven, it still remained for him to wash away his sins by baptism^e. When extraordinary gifts were poured out on Cornelius and his friends, so that, as St. Peter applied the Lord's promise, they were "baptized with the Holy Ghost," this did not supersede the appointed ordinance, but only warranted its use, without the previous administration of circumcision: "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord^f."

§ 7. As to the constituent parts of baptism, all that appears by Christ's institution to be essential in this sacrament is water and the prescribed form of words. It mattered not whether circumcision were performed with a sharp stone, or with a knife. It matters not whether baptism is administered with much or little water, by sprinkling or pouring water upon the body, or by plunging, dipping, or immersing the body in water: nor is there any precept or direction whatsoever in Scripture on the subject. The practice before mentioned^g, from which baptism is thought to have been adopted as an emblem of regeneration, was performed, we may be

^e Acts xxii. 16. ^f Acts xi. 16. x. 44-48. ^g p. 17.

sure, not by plunging the new-born infant in water, but by applying water to the body. The purifications in use among the Jews, the "divers baptisms^h," as St. Paul calls them, were most of them partial washings of the body, not bathing the whole in water. The prophet Ezekiel is supposed to prefigure this sacrament under the image of "sprinkling clean waterⁱ;" and to this mode of administration St. Paul seems to allude, where, with a manifest eye to baptism, he speaks of Christians "having" (literally, "having had") their hearts *sprinkled* from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with pure water^k."

It is not certain from the New Testament whether the apostles used several methods or one only; nor, if one only, what that was. And if, as we are often called upon for scriptural proofs of things in themselves indifferent, so we in our turn should demand scriptural proof of immersion in baptism, we should demand, I am persuaded, what could never be made out. Our Lord was baptized in Jordan; but where is it said, that his blessed body was covered with the waters? The

^h So it is in the Greek, Heb. ix. 10.

ⁱ Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Compare Isai. lii. 15.

^k Heb. x, 22.

Jews wore fandals, a sole of leather tied over the foot with a thong; and their legs were bare. Why then might not our Lord step down into the river with John, and receive baptism at his hands, as the painters represent him to have received it; the Baptist pouring water on his precious head? I do not say it was administered in this manner; but, for aught that can be concluded from the words of the Evangelists, this is as probable as any other.

At Jerusalem, situate among hills, there were winter torrents, but no large and perennial river. In this city, at a feast observed in the beginning of harvest, consequently in summer, about three thousand souls were converted and baptized in one day¹. Is it likely that all these were, we might almost ask, is it possible they could be, baptized by immersion? And when the gaoler at Philippi and all his family were baptized at midnight, either in the prison, or in his house adjoining the prison, is it by any means probable that immersion was used^m?

§ 8. To Baptize, which sometimes implies dipping, more properly and frequently means to wash; and it is often used of such

¹ Acts ii. 41.

^m Acts xvi. 33.

washings

washings as are performed by external application of water, not by putting the vessel into water ⁿ. If immersion resembles burial, so that by this form we may most properly be said to be "buried with Christ by baptism into death^o," sprinkling or pouring water on the body more aptly figures the prime end of baptism, the purifying of the soul from sin; inasmuch as bodily cleansing is more frequently performed by partial ablution, than by bathing. Both forms are allowed by our church; but dipping has in the western world for many ages past been rarely used, since in these cold regions it might be attended with danger, and has been known to occasion death. It is extremely probable that the apostles used both modes; and we are sure the primitive Christians did; for though immersion

ⁿ Mark vii. 4. is in the original, "except they baptize," and "the *baptisms* of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables." In St. Luke xi. 38. "he marvelled that he had not first *baptized* before dinner;" that is, "washed his hands," as appears by Matth. xv. 2. Mar. vii. 5. We before quoted Heb. ix. 10. For such purifications as these, not for bathing, the water pots were designed, John iii. 6. And it was customary to wash the hands not only by dipping them, but by pouring water upon them, 2 Kings iii. 11. So Hom. Iliad iii. 270.

^o Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12.

was the public custom, yet, in cases of necessity, they baptized the sick in bed; and baptism thus administered was never repeated.

§ 9. To Infant Baptism an objection is made from our blessed Saviour's words, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved"; whence it is inferred, that infants, being incapable of actual belief, are not to be baptized. On this we observe, first, that it is no good rule in interpreting laws to extort a negative precept out of a positive; to exclude from privileges (and baptism assuredly is a privilege) those whom the letter of the law does not exclude. The edicts of men are not so construed, and we are not taught to expound the divine laws with greater rigour and severity than we do human laws. But with regard to the words in question, if we read the whole verse, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned;" it is clear that the want of belief here spoken of, if it excludes from baptism (which is *not said*) excludes from salvation also. And since those who disallow infant baptism do not however as we hear and hope, on the ground

of this or any other text of Scripture, deny the salvation of infants merely through their want or incapacity of faith, neither ought they, from this text, to refuse them baptism. The words, it is evident, relate not at all to infants, but to those and those only who are competent to believe, and have opportunity of believing; who, when the gospel is preached to them, refuse to embrace it.

§ 10. ANOTHER objection is raised from the words of the commission recorded by St. Matthew: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost^a." Hence, arguing negatively as before, they conclude that none are to be baptized who have not been previously taught, and of course, that infants are excluded. In order to see whether this is the fair and natural meaning of the passage, let us apply it to a parallel case. Suppose the governours of our church, or the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge, were to send out missionaries, as they frequently do, with this instruction or precept, "Go ye and teach all the tribes of Indians, baptizing them in

^a Matth. xxviii. 19.

that

that form of words which Christ ordained ;” I ask, Would the person, thus instructed, understand that by the tenour of his commission he was bound to baptize none but adults? Would he not rather, without difficulty or hesitation, conclude himself obliged to preach the gospel to all that were of age to understand, and willing to learn, and to baptize not only adults, but infants together with their believing friends or parents? I desire the case may be well considered, for it is exactly similar. And if any doubt arose respecting the direction given, established usage would naturally in both instances be regarded as a comment. The missionary knows that infants are received into the church of England by baptism. The apostles knew that into the Jewish church, into the former covenant, infants were admitted as well by baptism as by circumcision; of course they were to be admitted into the new covenant, the more gracious dispensation of Jesus Christ.

It is further to be observed with respect to this verse, that the word, on which so much stress is laid, is not accurately translated. For it is not “ *teach* all nations;” That is mentioned by the proper term for “ teaching” in the next verse. But here it is, “ Go
and

and *disciple*," or according to the margin, "make disciples or Christians of all nations[†]." And further still, it is not "Disciple *and* baptize them," as if two distinct acts were intended; but "Disciple all nations, baptizing them," that is, Make them disciples *by* baptizing them. But here again perhaps the matter will be more clearly apprehended by an example.

St. Paul teaches us, that the Lord's supper is a solemn memorial of the death of Christ. Suppose then he had said, with a small variation of his present words, "Shew ye the Lord's death, eating this bread, and drinking this cup^{*};" the meaning evidently would be, Shew forth his death *by* the appointed ordinance, *by* eating that bread, and drinking that cup. In like manner, "Disciple all nations, baptizing them," is, Make disciples of them, *by* baptizing them. There are other ways of declaring Christ's death; we may proclaim it by words. There may be instances, where a person willing to learn may be called a disciple, though he has not

[†] The sense of the word is evidently the same, Acts xiv. 21. (as the margin there again renders it) "When they had preached the gospel to that city, and *had made many disciples*," that is, had baptized many.

^{*} 1 Cor. xi. 26.

yet, by any public act, been received as such. But, notwithstanding this, the form of expression in our blessed Lord's precept, and in the words borrowed from St. Paul, is perfectly similar, and the interpretation the same: "Shew the Lord's death by participating the appointed sacrament of bread and wine:" "Make disciples by the appointed sacrament of baptism."

§ 11, THE example of our blessed Lord is here, as every where, a bright and living comment on his law; and from his condescension to little children, and his declarations concerning them, an unprejudiced reader of the gospels would much sooner conclude, that they were most fit of all others, than that they were totally unfit, to be made His disciples. It does not indeed appear that he himself baptized infants (for we do not know that he ever baptized any one¹), but he represents them as the pattern of his true disciples; and the pattern holden up for imitation is usually more perfect than the copy designed to resemble it. He declares, what in the whole volume of Scripture is not said respecting grown persons, "that

¹ See John iv. 2.

in heaven Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven^u." He says expressly " of such is the kingdom of God^w ;" and if this means, in the highest sense, the kingdom of heaven, we may well ask, Are they fit for that glorious state, the society of saints and angels, and yet not fit to be members of Christ's church upon earth? But if the kingdom here intended is, according to the more frequent import of the expression, the Messiah's kingdom in this world, he then affirms that little children are members of it. To receive a person in Christ's name is to receive him as a disciple of Christ; to receive a little child therefore in the name of Christ is to receive Him as a disciple; and whosoever so receiveth such an one, receiveth Christ also^x. Our Lord admits even that little children are capable of actual belief in him; for he says, holding at the same time a little child in his blessed arms, " Whoso shall offend one of These little ones which *believe* in me^y." In a word,
amidst

^u Matth. xviii. 10.

^w Mark x. 14. Matth. xix. 14. Luke xviii. 16.

^x Mark ix. 37.

^y Matth. xviii. 6. Our blessed Lord taking the little child by the hand (*ἐπιλαβόμενος*, Mar. ix. 36.) set him by him (Luke ix. 47.) in the midst of his disciples; and then

amidst all the indignities, and affronts, and contradictions, which in the whole course of his holy life he endured, twice only, so far as appears, was he moved with any degree of anger. He was angry and grieved at the hardness of heart of those who would not allow a miracle to save life on the sabbath^z; and “he was *much displeased*” with his own disciples when they would have kept little children from him^a.

Under the impression of this conduct and these words of their blessed Master, the apostles received a commission directed to all nations, or, as St. Mark has it, to “all the world, the whole creation^b”; in which certainly all mankind, young as well as old, were interested, if all are interested in the forgiveness of sins. We ask, Is it likely they re-

took him up in his arms, and spoke the words quoted. As it appears (Matth. xviii. 2.) that the child could come when he was called, he was probably not under two years old; and since our Lord took him up in his arms, he was probably not above four. At such an age did He who knew what was in man acknowledge a degree of actual belief in this infant!

^z Mark iii. 5.

^a Mark x. 14. The original literally is, “he was *indignant*,” but “much displeased” is sufficiently strong for this and other passages where it occurs.

^b Mark xvi. 15.

strained this commission, expressed without any limitation whatsoever, to such a sense, that, notwithstanding it was addressed to all nations, it never could at one and the same time include any one nation, nor any one town, and scarcely any one family? This surely is in the highest degree improbable.

§ 12. YET we are told with an air of triumph, as if the remark was a sufficient answer to all that is or can be said on the subject, "There is neither precept nor example of Infant Baptism in the New Testament." The very same objection might be made to immersion in baptism. For neither is That commanded in Scripture, nor is there any certain example of the practice. We know indeed from the history of the church that baptism was, in the first ages, generally administered by immersion; and from the same history we know that infants were baptized. But from the Scriptures alone neither of these points can be made out with *certainly*; and all that can be said is this, that from the tenour and circumstances of many passages it is *more probable* that infants were baptized, than that baptism was ever then performed by immersion.

But to meet the matter fairly, let it be considered how many customs of undisputed authority this objection, were it really of the weight that is pretended, would at once overturn. There is no command in Scripture for appropriating the first day of the week as the Christian sabbath or day of religious worship, in room of the Jewish sabbath, which was the last day of the week. It is founded on the uninterrupted usage of the church, corroborated by several collateral circumstances, but no direct injunction, in the writings of the apostles. The ceremony of Confirmation stands on the same ground. But what is still more to the purpose, and fully shews the weakness of the objection, is this: There is neither precept nor example in Scripture for administering the Lord's supper to women; and yet their right to that blessed ordinance is not questioned, although women did not partake of the corresponding Jewish sacrament; for the passover was eaten by males only. If then the reason of the thing, and the general practice of Christians, are a sufficient warrant, as they are justly allowed to be, for giving the Lord's supper to females, although this is *contrary* to the custom of the Jewish church in a like case, surely the same reason and the same practice are

are a sufficient authority for administering baptism to infants, which is *not contrary but conformable* to the usage of the Jews in regard both to circumcision and baptism. And this doubtless must be admitted, that the grace of forgiveness is as necessary for infants born in sin, as strengthening grace is for those of mature years.

§ 13. WE read of several whole houses baptized by the apostles*. Were all these without children, which are a part of most families? If others argue from the silence of history, why may not we? The Acts of the Apostles comprise the space of full thirty years from our Lord's ascension; and St. John lived and wrote thirty years longer. During all this period how is it that we never hear of any of the children of those many thousands who on the day of Pentecost and soon afterwards embraced the gospel, being baptized when they grew up? The answer, no doubt, is, they were baptized in their infancy together with their parents. St. Paul calls children, even if one of their parents was a

* Acts xvi. 15. 32—34. 1 Cor. i. 16. Acts x. 48. with xi. 14.

Christian, “ holy,” or “ saints^d,” the very same word or title by which he commonly addresses his Christian brethren ; and in what tolerable sense this can be spoken of those who are born in sin, before their sins have been done away by being baptized into Christ, it is very difficult to explain or comprehend. Those Fathers of the church who lived in the age next after the apostles, shew that infant baptism was then in use. Other early writers expressly inform us that the apostles baptized infants. How could so great an alteration as the introduction of infant baptism ever take place without being observed, and opposed, and recorded, if it had not existed from the beginning? We know when a different practice began, and how strenuously it was condemned on its first appearance. The established usage of the church would have experienced the like opposition, had it been an innovation. But in

^d 1 Cor. vii. 14. The beginning of the verse, it has been observed, should rather be translated, “ The unbelieving husband *hath been sanctified*, &c.” The believing wife has often been the means of her husband’s conversion, and of his being in consequence sanctified by baptism. See verse 16. To *sanctify* is a common expression in the early fathers for baptism; and so St. Paul seems to use it in this same epistle, vi. 11.

fact

fact there is hardly any one point in which all Christians, of all ages and all denominations, have agreed so much as they have in this matter of infant baptism. While the apostles were living, there were some who called in question the Divinity of our Lord, some denied the resurrection of the dead, and some were guilty of scandalous abuses in the Lord's supper; and every subsequent age has been disgraced by some heresy, or distracted by some schism. But still there was one bond and centre of union. By one baptism^e they all were made members of one body; and though we now and then hear of an individual, a convert from paganism, who, through some unreasonable whim or scruple, deferred his baptism, there was not, during the period of fifteen hundred years, a church upon earth that did not invariably baptize the children of believing parents.

§ 14. IN a word, Beneficial Contracts, of which number baptism clearly is one, have always, by the common sense and opinion of mankind, been esteemed valid, when made in the name of infants. There never was a political state or kingdom, there never was a

^e 1 Cor. xii. 13. Eph. iv. 5.

religious

religious system in the world, whereof infants might not be made members by their parents, or guardians, or other proper persons, acting for them. Into the Mosaic covenant they were admitted by the express command of God himself. With an eye to that covenant our blessed Lord calls His dispensation “light and easy^f ;” and, in reference to the same, an apostle styles it “a better covenant, established upon better promises^g.” Little children therefore, admissible into the more rigid, are doubtless admissible into the more gracious, covenant ; and being thus united to Christ the Head, receive from Him, in virtue of such union and membership, the aid of the Holy Spirit to assist and direct their opening powers.

^f Matth. xi. 30.

^g Heb. viii. 16.

CHAPTER II.

*On the Lord's Supper ; of its necessary parts
and unessential circumstances.*

§ 1. THE holy Eucharist or Supper of the Lord is, in common with Baptism, a positive institution of Christ himself ; and has this also in common, an outward visible sign to represent and to convey to us invisible and spiritual grace. But in other respects, and in the special design of each, the two blessed sacraments are manifestly distinguished and contrasted. In the one, the party to be baptized having by himself or his sureties renounced sin, having declared his belief of the Christian faith, and his desire to be baptized into it, the rite itself is performed *upon him* without any necessary co-operation on his part. The other includes and requires a voluntary act in the person communicating. The one therefore, borrowed as it was originally perhaps from what is first done to infants^b, is still applicable to infants ; the other evidently does not belong to them. The

^b See above, p. 17.

elements adopted are the sustenance, not of babes, but of those who are of full age. Infants cannot "take, and eat" or "drink" what is offered to them. They cannot "do this in remembrance" of what they are not capable of being taught, the death of Christ. They cannot "examine themselves," nor "discern" by the eye of faith in the bread broken "the body" of Christ bruised for us, and in the wine poured out his blood shed for the remission of sins. But all this they who are come to years of discretion are capable of doing; and therefore all this they are by solemn command bound to do. It suffices if we *once* become parties in a covenant; but to perform the conditions of that covenant may be matter of daily care and vigorous exertion. Baptism therefore is one, and not to be repeated: but at the Lord's table we should be frequent guests; for spiritual sustenance is as necessary for the soul, as material food is for the body.

§ 2. In regard to the rite itself, here as in the other sacrament, all that appears to be absolutely essential to it is the appointed elements and solemn form of words. Other concomitant circumstances may be suitable to the devout and edifying administration; but,

but, not being commanded in Scripture, are not required to be every where and unalterably the same.

§ 3. It has been thought probable that our blessed Lord instituted this ordinance with wine mixed with water¹, since in those hot countries they seldom drank it otherwise; and there can be no doubt, as it was ordained at the feast of unleavened bread, that the bread he used was not leavened. Neither circumstance, we may assure ourselves, is essential to the integrity and efficacy of the blessed ordinance. If the bread is fermented, and the wine is unmixed and pure, we may draw that lesson from the cup, which St. Paul did from the bread when it was “unleavened,” that “sincerity and truth^k” are the duties and ornaments of a Christian.

§ 4. AGAIN, the posture is another unessential circumstance. It was ordained by our Lord after supper; and, for aught that appears, both He that gave and those that received might kneel or stand. But if the

¹ The sacramental cup in the time of Justin Martyr, and therefore probably from the first, was wine and water. Apol. i. c. 85.

^k See 1 Cor. v. 8.

posture is supposed (for it cannot be proved) to have been the same as at supper, it must be observed, that though for the sake of those whose customs are different, it is properly enough translated " he *sat down* with the twelve¹ ; " yet the real attitude expressed by St. Matthew differs as much from sitting as from kneeling ; for it is lying along. And a deviation in this respect is to be noted from the original law of the passover. The words of Moses clearly imply, and were always, I believe, understood to imply, that the passover was to be eaten standing^m. The law, so far as we know, was never repealed nor altered, but the practice varied from the strict import of it in this particular ; and with the practice our blessed Saviour complied, and lay along on his side at this paschal supper, as at other mealsⁿ. If he continued in the same posture when

¹ Matth xxvi. 20.

^m Exod. xii. 11.

ⁿ Their tables were surrounded with beds or couches, each capable of holding three persons, so disposed that the head of the second came up to the breast of the first ; and so of the rest. This explains how at this very supper St. John " was leaning on Jesus' bosom," or " lying on Jesus' breast," placed as now described next his beloved Master : John xiii. 23. 25. This also explains how when our Lord was at meat in the house of Simon the Pharisee, Luke vii. 36, &c. a certain woman, whose piety is there recorded,

when he took bread and blessed it, his example now noted shews, that in such unimportant matters we may leave without blame what has even been commanded, if the circumstances of the times or country and the authority of the church require another, in itself harmless, usage. If we kneel at the Lord's table, we are in less danger of falling into the error of the Corinthians, and not distinguishing between this and an ordinary repast; and no posture surely can be too devout and humble, when we renew our vows before God, and the instrument of pardon is put into our hands.

§ 5. It does not appear whether our blessed Lord, having broken the bread, gave part to each of his disciples, or whether it passed from one to another. The former mode seems to agree best with the words of the evangelists^o; and it is certainly most reasonable that what we receive as from Christ, in his name and by his appointment, should be

recorded, "*stood at his feet behind him, and washed his feet with tears.*" Wherever eating is mentioned in the New Testament, if the posture be expressed, it is, I believe, invariably the same.

^o Matth. xxvi. 26. Mark xiv. 22. Luke xxii. 19. 1 Cor. xi. 24.

given

given to each by His appointed minister. And this was the practice of the primitive church ^p.

§ 6. LASTLY, there is no command, nor in the apostolical age uniformity of example, respecting the time of administration. It was instituted in the evening; St. Paul once administered it a little after midnight ^q; and we know, in those times of danger, it was often celebrated about the hour of sun-rising. In one respect, I believe, there has been no variation: this, as it is the most solemn, has always been the concluding part of divine service. And when the Almighty vouchsafes the blessing of peace and protection, so that we are at liberty to fix the time of public worship, no hour surely can be so proper for this most sublime part of Christian devotion, as when the powers of the mind, before the first full and substantial meal, are most clear, most lively and vigorous. Nor, if we could but for a moment lay aside prejudice, and consider the matter dispassionately, is it perhaps possible to devise a form of celebration more simple and more striking, more consonant to the nature and design of this holy

^p Justin Martyr, Apol. i. c. 85. 87.

^q Acts xx. 7. 11.
institution,

institution, than the Communion Service of the Church of England; consisting, as it does, of hymns of praise most sublime, and of prayers most humble and most ardent, as old some of them as the days of the apostles.

CHAPTER III.

On the Liturgy.

§ 1. BUT that we should have any such written or precomposed forms of prayer is with some persons matter of offence, a source of constant objection, and grievous complaint. Our answer is short, and ought surely to be satisfactory: Such forms are commanded in both Testaments, and have been used in the church of God from the time of Moses to this hour. At the express command of God, Moses gave a form of words wherewith Aaron and his sons should bless the children of Israel^r. He wrote an acknowledgement or confession to be used when they offered the first-fruits of the earth, and another when they brought their tithes; both of them religious addresses, and the latter concluding with a direct and solemn prayer^s. And there are in his writings

^r Numb. vi. 24—26. It is adopted in the Visitation of the Sick; and, with a little alteration in the form, in the Communion.

^s Deut. xxvi. 5—10. 13—15.

many other forms for public use^t. Moses himself pronounced a short but unvaried prayer, when the ark set forward to lead them in their journies; and another, shorter still, when the ark rested, and the army pitched their tents^u. The Psalms, some of which were penned by Moses, always formed a part of divine worship; and there is scarcely one in the whole number that is not in some part an immediate prayer to God^w. Of David it is not only recorded, that he appointed the courses of priests and Levites and singers, whose business was to praise the Lord with psalms^x; but we also find that as well for these “courses,” “and for all the work of the service of the house of the Lord,” as for the “pattern” of the house itself, he received divine direction; or, as his own emphatic words express it, “All this the Lord

^t See Numb. v. 19—22. Deut. xxi. 7, 8. xxvii. 14, &c. with Josh. viii. 34.

^u Numb. x. 35, 36. with verse 33. which shews that these forms were not used once only, but constantly.

^w The lxxviiith and cxivth are exceptions. They are in a very noble strain of poetry, founded, as the sublimest flights of poetry in all languages are, upon historical events; but they do not strictly answer to the nature of prayer. Psalm ist and xxxviiith, and perhaps a few more, are also exceptions.

^x 1 Chron. xxv.

made me understand in writing by his hand upon me^v.³

Thus then matters stood in the Jewish Church. Some forms for various occasions were given by Moses; and after his authority and example others were added; and the service of the synagogue consisted of old, as it does at this day, of precomposed offices, not of extemporary effusions. It should be added, that the reading of the law and the prophets always formed a part of the public service of God, from the time that there was a written law and written prophecies to be read.

§ 2. OUR blessed Lord in his sermon on the mount, after correcting some abuses and giving some directions on the subject of prayer, says to his disciples, "After this manner therefore pray ye," or rather, literally, "Thus therefore pray ye;" and he proceeded to deliver, not instructions concerning the matter or the form of prayer, as, "Ye shall pray that the name of God may be hallowed," but a direct and formal prayer: "Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name^z." A preface, "Pray thus," fol-

^v 1 Chron. xxviii. 11—13. 19.

^z Matth. vi. 9.

lowed

lowed by a prayer, looks surely very like a command to use that prayer. But this is not all.

§ 3. SOME time after this, about a year and half probably, one of our Lord's disciples, who either had not been present at the sermon on the mount, or doubted, it may be, whether the prayer uttered then was a model for imitation, or a form to be used, made this request unto him: "Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples^a." There can be little doubt from these words that what John had given, and what this disciple wished to receive, was a specific form of prayer for constant use. Our blessed Lord answered accordingly; except that, to shew that the prayer was not meant, as indeed it was not asked, for the individual merely, he addressed himself generally to those present; and said unto them, "When ye pray, say, Our Father." And he delivered a prayer consisting of petitions the same in number (three regarding the honour of God, and three the welfare of man), the same in sense, the same in order, and almost the very same in terms, as the prayer that made a part of

^a Luke xi. 1.

his sermon on the mount. It is difficult to devise a command for the use of a particular form, if this, taken in all its circumstances, is not such. A prayer is twice delivered by our Lord to his disciples, prefaced each time with what any plain man would apprehend was a precept, but in the second instance introduced with an injunction as clear and peremptory as language can express; for "Say this" is surely as much a command as "Do this." And the blessed Speaker condescended to enforce what he taught by proceeding to press upon his hearers earnestness and frequency, and even "importunity" in prayer^b.

§ 4. THE apostles appear to have conformed to the practice of the Jewish church, and what we understand to be the precept of their divine Master. For there are, I think, only two public prayers of their's recorded in Scripture; and one of these, short as it is, might probably be precomposed^c; and the other manifestly was so. The historian says, "They lift up their voice to God with one accord^d;" and then he recites the words

^b See verse 5—13. and compare xviii. 1, &c.

^c Acts i. 24, 25.

^d Acts iv. 24.

which

which they uttered. Now the prayer which they thus unanimously spoke aloud, they surely must have known before. We do not say it was impossible with Him to whom all things are possible, to inspire at the same instant a number of men to pronounce, each of them precisely in the same words, a prayer of some length; but no such instance is elsewhere to be found; and here it was evidently unnecessary; and lastly the sequel proves the fact to have been otherwise. For “when they *had* prayed,” and not before, “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.”

§ 5. MIRACULOUS ability in prayer was not promised by our Lord. No such power is mentioned among the manifold gifts of the Holy Spirit^e. Wisdom and utterance were bestowed on the apostles to confound their enemies and to propagate the truth; but the design of public speaking and of prayer is very different. A man may *teach* and *persuade*, who tells what is entirely new to his hearers; but all the petitions of a prayer every one present should make his own, by joining heartily in each as they are succes-

^e Ver. 31.

^f See 1 Cor. xii. 4—11.

sively delivered. And surely this may best be done, when the prayer is known beforehand.

§ 6. THE first Christians sung or recited psalms in their public assemblies^s; and these, as before observed, consist of prayers as well as praise. We are well assured that the apostles used the Lord's prayer. There are liturgies extant, and in part adopted in our own, which are almost if not quite as old as the days of the apostles; and these, or other forms in great measure similar to them, have ever since constituted the public offices of Christian worship throughout the world. At this day I believe all congregations of Christians upon earth, Protestants as well as others, make use of composed forms of prayer, excepting some Dissenters among ourselves and some branches propagated from them, who zealously insist upon an extemporary method; of which the example, it is said, was first set them by two concealed members of the church of Rome.

§ 7. If there was much less (whereas in truth there is much more) to be said in favour

^s See 1 Cor. xiv. 26,

of a standing liturgy; if such forms were merely lawful, even in that case we ought, when enjoined, to conform to them. For upon the ground both of reason and of Scripture, we owe submission in all lawful matters to the separate, and still more to the joint, authority of our ecclesiastical and civil governours^b.

§ 8. BUT certain objections have been made to our established liturgy, which, notwithstanding they have been fully and repeatedly answered, are still with some persons matter of complaint or of scruple.

1. Some of our prayers, we are told, are taken from the Mass-book, or other offices of the church of Rome. It is true; for the compilers of our liturgy, intent upon just and necessary reformation, not upon changing for the sake of change, retained these prayers, few in number, because they were excellent, and because they had been used by the church before it was corrupted by Romanism. The Lord's prayer, the psalms, and a great part of holy Scripture are also to be found in the Romish

^b See, among many passages of Scripture of like import, Heb. xiii. 7. 1 Pet. ii. 13.

rituals; but they are not for that reason the worse, I trust, nor less proper and necessary for constant use.

2. The repetitions of the Lord's prayer, and of the doxology "Glory be to the Father," are complained of; but our blessed Lord, in the space of one hour, prayed three times, "saying the same wordsⁱ;" and in the cxxxvith psalm, which consists of twenty-six verses, "His mercy endureth for ever" forms a part of every verse. The "vain repetitions," against which our blessed Lord cautioned his disciples, were such as the heathen used, and such as the priests of Baal used, who "called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us^k." The prohibition of vain repetitions imports that there may be repetitions which are not vain; and there can be no reasonable objection to the recurrence of a prayer already used, if the matter is managed, as it is in our liturgy, so that there is a moderate interval between the returns; if the subject of the prayer is weighty and solemn, apt also to inspire what the particular occasion demands, the most devout affections, the

ⁱ Matth. xxvi. 44. Compare Rom. xvi. 20. 24.

^k 1 Kings xviii. 26.

most ardent supplication to heaven. It was the aim of our Reformers, and herein, I freely own, I applaud their wisdom as well as piety ; it was their aim to recommend and sanctify their book by inserting in each distinct office one prayer infallibly excellent, infallibly grateful to the Almighty to hear, the words of his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased : which words when the blessed Author of them delivered and commanded his disciples to use, he framed them so in his heavenly foresight, as to suit every state of his church, and to be for ever, agreeably to his precept, a prayer in his name ; and that, not only because to say the prayer he taught, in obedience to his command, is manifestly to pray in his name, but also because we have no right to use the invocation of this prayer, and call God our Father, but through Jesus Christ. For the relation, in which we stood by creation, having been forfeited by sin, it is only as we are the adopted sons of God in Christ that we have access with boldness to cry, “ Abba, Father ¹.”

§ 9. THE damnatory clauses, as they are called, in the Athanasian creed, evidently

¹ Eph. iii. 12. Gal. iv. 6.

refer to the general doctrine or faith of "One God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity;" and not to the remarks, however excellent, that are made concerning it, and introduced with For, Therefore, and the like. The declaration of our Lord is equally peremptory: "He that believeth not shall be damned:" There is therefore a disbelief that is damnable; and that which our Lord himself pronounces so, is either the same or includes the same whereof the creed speaks. And if any point of faith is necessary to salvation, what can be more so than that which regards the object of divine worship? If by "believing" here our Lord means believing the "gospel," which is mentioned in the foregoing verse, of that gospel assuredly the doctrine of the holy Trinity is a leading article. But the passage itself seems to restrain the faith specially to the profession made in baptism; for the whole verse runs thus: "He that believeth and is *baptized*, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned^m." Now the faith professed in baptism ever has been faith in the

^m Mark xvi. 16. Compare John iii. 18. where the condemnation spoken of is, as here, for want of belief, and That "in the name of the only-begotten Son of God." See also the last verse of the chapter.

bleſſed Trinity; for we are baptized in the name, and muſt therefore believe in the name, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt. Conſequently our bleſſed Lord declares, and the creed with reference to his words declares, that they who wilfully reject this faith cannot be ſaved.

Our bleſſed Lord, who in the foregoing paſſage taught the neceſſity of that faith which he came into the world to eſtabliſh, on another occaſion, ſpeaking of his miniſtry upon earth, ſaid, “ I judge no man ^a.” May not, or rather ought not, we to ſay the ſame? For as there is, I am perſuaded, no text in holy writ, ſo I know of no part of our liturgy, that permits, I do not ſay authoriſes but *per-mits*, me to apply ſuch general declarations as thoſe in queſtion to any one individual, that now is or ever was in the world. “ You tell me you renounce the belief of the ever bleſſed Trinity, or you confeſs you live in habits of ſin.” “ Then you renounce that belief, which the creed pronounces, as our bleſſed Saviour had pronounced, to be neceſſary to ſalvation; or you live in a ſtate, which, as the creed aſſures us and the goſpel alſo aſſures us, leads to perdition.” Is there

^a John viii. 15. with xii. 47.

want of charity in this? nay, is it not an act of true charity thus to warn every man, and to endeavour by sound speech to convince him of the truth? But if he persist in his error or his sin, though the creed, or rather the gospel whereupon it is founded, may condemn him at the last day^o, we judge no man; “to his own Master he standeth or falleth^p.”

§ 10. BUT what has principally contributed perhaps to the prevalence of wrong notions in regard to this creed, and other parts both of our liturgy and of holy Scripture, is inattention or misapprehension of the use and import of the word Amen; which, according as it is subjoined to a prayer, or to a proposition, is either a prayer, or simply a declaration. For instance, I say a prayer ending with Amen, or I say Amen to a prayer delivered by another; and here it is “Be it so,” be all that I have prayed for, all that the prayer expresses, granted. But I read one of the Gospels which concludes with Amen; I rehearse one of the Creeds, and say Amen; or I pronounce or hear one of the divine curses against impenitent finners,

* See John xii. 48.

^p Rom. xiv. 4.

and

and say Amen; in all which instances it denotes "So it is;" this Gospel is a true and faithful account; the articles of this creed are so many solemn truths, and I most firmly believe them; it is true that fornicators and adulterers and other sinners are objects of the divine wrath and indignation.

§ 11. It is an unfortunate, and to me I confess a strange mistake, that any person who considers what is said in the burial service when the corpse is laid in the earth, should understand the "sure and certain hope of the resurrection" there mentioned as referring particularly to the body then interred. "We commit the body to the ground,—in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life through our Lord Jesus Christ," that is, very plainly to my apprehension, we use this solemn ceremony, or any or all the parts of it, because we are assured there will be a resurrection to eternal life; for were it not for this certain hope, we should remove a deceased body from our sight without any religious act or form of words, as we do the brutes that perish. If any thing more than this be intended, it is merely a tacit or implied hope (for it is not expressed) that the body of the deceased may
be

be one of that happy number, that shall arise to be crowned with immortality and glory.

And this is agreeable to that other passage, which undoubtedly does relate to the deceased; where we pray "that when we shall depart this life we may rest in Christ, as our hope is this our brother doth." St. Paul says of charity, that it "hopeth all things^a;" by which words he in part explains the nature of hope, as well as of charity. It extends from the edge of absolute certainty, from sight and possession, to the very border of total despair; and in this wide range somewhat of its occasional strength or weakness will naturally be expressed by the varied tone and emphasis of the voice. But unless I am infallibly sure, which I never can be without an immediate revelation from heaven, that the party does not sleep in peace, I may charitably hope, and therefore charitably declare my hope, that he does.

Nor is this any encouragement, God forbid it should be, to sin and wickedness. For my hope, whether feeble or confident, makes no alteration in the nature of the case; and This every living man should lay to his heart. It may, if you will have it so, be a million to

^a 1 Cor. xiii. 7.

one that a person, whom you shall mention, did not leave this world with the divine favour and forgiveness : now suppose, that even in such a case, because I am not absolutely certain that he did die unforgiven, I do therefore hope, however tremblingly and faintly, that he did not ; if any one, induced by my hope or the dying man's hope, will be so amazingly thoughtless, as to risk his soul where it is a million to one he perishes everlastingly, at his peril be it ! We, surely, and the church are guiltless of his blood. “ The office is not to be used for any that die unbaptized, or excommunicate, or have laid violent hands upon themselves^r ;” because it is absurd to afford Christian burial to those who are not Christians ; and because we cannot say that “ it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto himself that soul,” which was not separated from the body by His visitation, but driven by the deliberate act and violence of the deceased. But as to the final state even of these, nothing is said. For let me again observe, and be it ever remembered, that our church, following the example of our blessed Saviour, and guided by the tenour of holy Scripture, *condemns no man*. It is our duty to *declare* the law, to

^r Rubrick.

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state

state the denunciations of vengeance against all ungodliness, and to enforce them with all the energy of truth and conviction; but to *apply* the law is the sole and inviolable prerogative of Him who gave the law, even God, who is the Lord and “ Judge of all.”

§ 12. It is the doctrine of the New Testament, that “ the whole world lieth in,” or “ is subject to, the wicked one;” “ the prince of this world,” as he is elsewhere called^u. At baptism we are in the situation which Joshua represents^w; we come that day to choose, by ourselves or sponsors, whom we will serve; whether we will continue the slaves of Satan, or prefer a better master. Both these masters we cannot serve; we must choose the one, and refuse or renounce the other. We renounce therefore, as has been usual in baptism ever since the apostolic age; we renounce the devil and all his works, or, more distinctly, the devil, the world, and the flesh, the temptations of the one, and the sins of the other; and we enlist ourselves the soldiers and servants of Jesus Christ. The duties, which we thus take upon ourselves,

^s Heb. xii. 23. ^t 1 John v. 19. *καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ.*

^u John xii. 31. xiv. 30. xvi. 11. ^w Josh. xxiv. 15.

or indeed any part of them, strictly speaking, we are not able to perform. But then divine assistance is held forth to us by that gracious covenant into which we enter, and is, among other means, communicated by the very sacrament of our admission; and pardon also of all our sins is promised in the same blessed covenant, upon our hearty repentance. Nevertheless as we are daily bound to resolve and strive against all sin, even if we had not by baptism or otherwise made any explicit vow and declaration to that effect; so it is right, in conformity with primitive custom and the design of this ordinance, to renounce in baptism all sin, and promise all obedience; not reserving to ourselves the liberty of breaking one commandment, while we keep, or pretend to keep, all the rest. By circumcision the Jew became a debtor to do the whole law, that is, if we will be rigorous interpreters, he bound himself to an impossibility. By baptism we make ourselves debtors to the entire law of Christ, that is, again, if we interpret rigidly, we oblige ourselves to what is impossible. Yet the Jews of old did, and we doubtless now do, what is acceptable to God, when we willingly take upon ourselves what, even were we unwilling, we should be bound to per-

form ; when we vow, as holy David did, that we will keep God's righteous judgments^x : and it cannot but be an additional security for the fulfilment of the obligation, when we have our own free and solemn engagement, as well as necessary duty, to incite us to diligence.

§ 13. THE sign of the Cross in baptism is, as our church declares^y, no part of the substance of that sacrament, nor adds any thing to the virtue and perfection of it. When the infant *has been* fully baptized, and is, both by that solemn act and by express words, "received into the congregation of Christ's flock," then we sign him with the sign of the cross, as a token or remembrance of the duties incumbent upon all who are baptized ; that by baptism they are dedicated to the service of a crucified Lord, and must neither abandon their profession through cowardice, nor disgrace it through wickedness, but persevere unto death, yielding obedience and striving against sin. In ancient times servants or slaves were known by a mark in their foreheads ; and, in allusion to this circumstance, we read in Scripture of the ser-

^x Psal cxix. 106.

^y See the 30th Canon.

vants of God having the seal or mark of the living God in their foreheads^a. And it was probably not without some regard to these passages of holy writ, and to the custom to which they refer, that the sign of the cross was adopted in baptism. But this is certain, that this “ mark of the Lord Jesus ” was used, as we now use it, in the primitive church, long before the corruptions of popery began, and probably in the very first or apostolical age.

§ 14. THE custom of having Godfathers, as witnesses, sponsors, or sureties in baptism, had its origin, like many other parts of Christian institution, from the corresponding practice of the Jewish church. With the Jews, as with us, the sponsors named the infant; which they did sometimes, as appears by the instance of John the Baptist, without consulting the parents^b. Then, as now, not the parents themselves, but other persons, chosen and appointed by them, contracted in the child's name. As they are Witnesses of the covenant, the solemn act is thus more public, and can be better attested, than if the parents

^a Rev. vii. 2. ix. 4. Ezek. ix. 4. ^a Gal. vi. 17.

^b See Luke i. 59—63.

alone were present, and made the required stipulations. As they are Sponsors or Sureties, the church has additional security that the child shall be Christianly brought up, and taught the nature of the baptismal covenant; and as the child is by this sacred ordinance born again, admitted into a new state with new privileges, washed from sin, made the child of God and heir of salvation, this new birth will be most distinctly marked and exhibited, if he derives it by means of other persons, and not by those to whom he owes his natural birth.

The promises, which the godfathers, authorised by the parents, make in the child's name, are binding upon the child, not upon the godfathers who act for him; just as when a person, duly appointed, is proxy for another in the marriage ceremony; when a man purchases an estate for another; when a commissioner signs a treaty, or transacts any business, for another: in all which and a thousand similar cases, the conditions or terms of the contract do not oblige the agent, but the party represented. The real duties of the godfathers are pointed out in the "exhortation" addressed to them; by which it appears that what concerns them is, not in the first instance to *teach* the child, That belongs to the

the parents, or guardians, or near relations, but only “ to *see* that the infant be taught ;” not themselves to teach him the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, but to “ *provide* that he may learn them ;” to take care that he may, or to know that he does, learn these and other essential parts of the Christian belief and doctrine. In this respect the situation of godfathers is the same as of the parties that warrant or guarantee a treaty, or are overseers of a will ; where the former do not engage to fulfil the treaty, but that those for whom they answer shall fulfil it ; and the latter are not bound to execute the will, but only to see that it is executed.

This, surely, is a fair and obvious account of what our church requires at the hands of godfathers and godmothers ; whose serious obligations it is far from my design to set aside or lessen ; but the nature of their obligations is often, I fear, strangely misunderstood, and, in consequence of that mistake, the duties of the office are regarded as if they were impossible to be performed. On the contrary, when viewed in its true light, what is there in the business that is difficult, or that even approaches to a difficulty ?

§ 15. A NOTION equally rigid and erroneous with the former prevails also respecting baptism. For it seems to be considered as if half a man's life was necessary to gain knowledge enough of Christianity to fit him to be made a Christian. But it was not so in those times which are our best pattern. Philip having journeyed with the Eunuch not more than a few miles probably, and having preached unto him Jesus, baptized him^c. When the miracle of an earthquake and St. Paul's preaching had convinced the gaoler at Philippi at midnight, he baptized him and all his house the same hour^d; and no miraculous illumination or gifts were, in either of these cases, imparted to the new converts.

§ 16. THE main points of Christian doctrine lie in a small compass. We believe in that holy name, into which we are baptized. Through Christ, who died for us, we hope for pardon of sin, the aid of his Spirit to incline and enable us to keep God's commandments, and finally by his merits alone to obtain after death everlasting life. Are these things hard to teach, or difficult to learn? Nay, if the religious instruction of a child is

^c Acts viii. 26, &c.

^d Acts xvi. 25—35.

totally

totally neglected by his parents and friends, and if he is entirely disregarded (a fault doubtless in that case by no means excusable) by his godfathers and godmothers; if he hangs loose upon society, and lives by chance and at all adventures; yet even then, as he grows up, would he not by his ordinary intercourse with other men, and by attending sometimes, where it can scarcely happen that he shall never once attend, in the house of God; would he not, by this which we call the natural course of things, acquire a knowledge of the great and saving truths of the gospel? We can hardly doubt it. For indeed those truths are so few, so plain, so generally diffused and written in our hearts, that (were but our practice answerable to our knowledge,) it has certainly pleased God in a wonderful manner to accomplish, in this our happy Christian land, his ancient promise: "They shall all know me from the least of them unto the greatest of them *."

§ 17. BUT to return more directly to the liturgy of our church: it is surely, could we view it without prejudice, truly excellent both in its spirit and variety. Considerable

* Jer. xxxi. 34.

portions of it are transcribed from holy Scripture; and the entire book of Psalms forms a part of it. Two lessons and an epistle and gospel are, at proper intervals, introduced from the sacred volume; the reading whereof, enjoined as it is frequently in both Testaments, has always constituted an essential part of the public service of God. The matter of the prayers is weighty and important, comprehending all those public and private blessings of pardon and peace, of health and prosperity, of grace and comfort, which the inspired Scriptures recommend as the proper subjects of our addresses to Heaven; and under which our individual wants may well be included, at least as far as it is requisite that they should be included in public prayers. The collects and other prayers, after the model of the Lord's prayer, are separately short, and afford the congregation an opportunity to make the petitions and thanksgivings their own by saying Amen, as has been usual ever since the days of Moses¹. They join also by responses of supplication and of praise, as has likewise for the same period of time been constantly practised; and this method, as

¹ Deut. xxvii. 15. 1 Chron. xvi. 36. Jer. xi. 5.
1 Cor. xiv. 16.

well as the variety of the service and attitudes, kneeling and sitting and standing, is manifestly best calculated to keep the attention alive and vigorous. In a word, there is in our prayers a dignified simplicity and energy of style, and a warmth of devotion, that is perhaps unequalled by any merely human compositions; and, in the eye of impartial judgement, it is surely better to use this select and accumulated piety of ages, than to trust to the extempore performance of the most eloquent and holy individual that ever lived; where, if we would offer up a truly Christian, that is, a “reasonable, service^s,” the mind must attend to two distinct things: We must first consider whether each successive petition is proper, and then address it with our wishes to Heaven. But in the published liturgy we know beforehand that the prayers are excellent; and therefore at the time of divine worship have only one single care before us, to send our whole heart and soul with every prayer, as it is uttered by the minister.

§ 18. LASTLY, the plan of these prayers, which I think is uniform, ought to be noted.

For they are not cold remarks or wishes respecting some absent being, " May the name of God be hallowed," " May his true religion flourish," as we say, " May the king live for ever," " May his counsels prosper ;" but they are direct addressees to that Almighty Lord, who though he is in heaven, is in earth also, every where present, and filleth all things: " O Lord, from whom all good things do come, Grant to us thy humble servants, that by thy holy inspiration we may think those things that be good:" " Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness:" " O God, who art the author of peace, and lover of concord,—Defend us thy humble servants ^h." And not only the Lord's prayer, but, so far as I can recollect, every prayer in holy Scripture, from Genesis to the Revelation, is in this same form: " O Lord God—I pray thee, send me good speed ⁱ:" " Hear Thou in heaven thy dwelling-place ^k:" " Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit ^l:" " Lord Jesus, receive my spirit ^m:" " Even so, Lord Jesus, come quickly ⁿ."

^h Collect 5 S. after Easter, Advent Sunday, second morning collect.

ⁱ Gen. xxiv. 12. ^k 1 Kings viii. 30. ^l Luke xxiii. 46.

^m Acts vii. 59. ⁿ Rev. xxii. 20.

§ 19. AND this is agreeable to the nature of the case. For though in *praising* a person it matters not whether the words be directed to him or spoken of him, and we may with equal propriety, if not with equal emphasis, say, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel," "My soul doth magnify the Lord^o," or, "Blessed be Thou, Lord God of Israel our Father^p," "We praise Thee, O God, we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord^q;" yet in *prayer*, which is *asking a favour*, the words in all reason should be addressed to Him, from whom the favour is desired: "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me^r:" "O hearken thou unto the voice of my calling, my King, and my God: for unto Thee will I make my prayer^s."

^o Luke i. 68. 46. ^p 1 Chron. xxix. 10. ^q Te Deum.
^r Psal. li. 10. ^s Psal. v. 2. O. V.

CHAPTER IV.

Of the Ministers of the Church of England.

§ 1. THE last part in the institution of the Church of England, which we proposed to consider, was the persons who perform her sacred offices. It has occasionally been observed, and should always be remembered, in questions respecting the polity and administration of Christ's church, that much of its outward form and ceremonies was borrowed from the Jewish church, in the room of which it succeeded. Under the Mosaic economy there was a high priest, priests, and Levites, invested with peculiar and subordinate powers. Answerable to this we have the threefold order of bishops, priests, and deacons, also invested with appropriate powers. During the personal ministry of our blessed Lord, he was, as he is expressly called, the High Priest, the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls¹; and he appointed under him the Twelve Apostles, and, subordinate to them, the Seventy Disciples². When he

¹ 1 Pet. ii. 25. v. 4. Heb. iv. 14, 15. xiii. 20.

² Luke x. 1, &c.

was about to leave the world and return unto the Father, he solemnly delegated his power to the apostles: "I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me": "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you." These, surely, are very awful declarations; and they were both of them followed with a more explicit and direct communication of authority. On the latter occasion particularly, "he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost. Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained*." And when he delivered his final commission to them to go and teach all nations, he added, "And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen†."

§ 2. ONE of the first acts which they did, in consequence of the powers thus conferred, was to complete their own number by filling up the place of the traitor Judas‡; and shortly afterwards, having received the gift of the Holy Ghost to enable them to fulfil their sacred office, "when the number of the

* Luke xxii. 29. * John xx. 21—23. Compare xvii. 18.

† Matth. xxviii. 18—20.

‡ Acts i. 15, &c.

disciples was multiplied," they proceeded to institute a new order of ministers, named Deacons, answering in some respects to the Seventy while Christ in his bodily presence was at the head of his church. And they ordained them precisely as ministers are ordained in the church of England at this day. Persons qualified for the office, fit to be entrusted with the requisite powers, were recommended to the apostles; and the apostles, in whom plenary authority resided, gave them those powers, "appointed them over the business, in a public assembly, by prayer, and laying on of hands^a.

§ 3. WHEN a new institution is set on foot, or a new art invented, a set of terms answering to the occasion is necessary; which must either be words entirely new, formed at pleasure, or else borrowed from names of things already in existence. The latter method has almost without exception been pursued in such cases, and is sanctioned by authority of earliest date and highest reverence. For when "the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground," he called his name,

^a Acts vi. 1-6.

in allusion to his origin, Adam, that is, earth^b.

§ 4. WHEN our blessed Saviour imparted to the world a new dispensation, some of the new terms which grew out of the occasion were *Messiah* or *Christ*^c, that is, anointed, *Gospel*, that is, good tidings, *Apostle*, that is, messenger, *Bishop*, that is, overseer or superintendant, *Presbyter* (of which *Priest* is an abbreviation) that is, elder, and *Deacon*, that is, servant or minister. All these, as appears by the translation of them now given, were names chosen and adapted in the manner before mentioned; and they did not at once but gradually lose their primitive, and acquire their secondary use and designation; although that secondary sense has now for ages past been so fully established, and is so familiar, that when we meet with one of those words,

^b Gen. ii. 7. v. 2. With like allusion, when Eve was formed, Adam called her "Woman," or as an old translation has it, "She shall be called *Manness*, because she was taken out of *Man*."

^c *Christ* is scarcely ever used in the Gospels without some addition to point out its high and peculiar designation, as, *The Christ*. *Gospel* had hardly attained what is now its current import when St. Matthew wrote. *Apostle* is translated *Messenger*, Phil. ii. 25. 2 Cor. viii. 23. It is applied to our Lord, Heb. iii. 1.

we think perhaps as little of its original meaning, as we do of earth when we hear the word Adam.

§ 5. It is very possible the three titles, by which we express the three orders of clergy, were not limited as we now understand them, while the books of the New Testament were successively written. Deacon, in its larger sense of Minister, is often applied to the apostles themselves^d. Bishoprick is used for the office of the apostles^e; and Bishop is applied not only to our Lord himself^f, but to those ministers, who perhaps in the course of a few verses are styled Presbyters^g. In like manner Presbyter, whether in its literal meaning as Elder, or in its figurative but common designation as Governour^h, is sometimes used by the apostles when speaking of themselves, and sometimes when they address those who had the care of the churchesⁱ. The promiscuous use of these words creates some difficulty in the passages where they occur, and has been the ground of much un-

^d 2 Cor. iii. 6. Eph. iii. 7.

^e Acts i. 20.

^f 1 Pet. ii. 25.

^g Acts xix. 28. 17.

^h It is the common name for the Jewish rulers, as Matth. xxvii. 20, &c.

ⁱ 1 Pet. v. 1. 2 John 1. 3 John 1.

profitable dispute ; but occasioned little or no trouble, when subsisting facts, and the well-known state of the church, were a comment on the language. We might at present, nearly in the same way, speaking either of a Bishop, or a Priest, or a Deacon, say, “ He is a diligent Minister,” or “ a worthy Pastor.” But the New Testament itself furnishes a better example belonging to the same times. It is well known the Jews had only one High Priest ; yet the same word in the Greek is applied to others, to the heads of sacerdotal families, or persons eminent among them ; and is translated “ Chief Priests ^k,” or, if one is meant, “ Chief of the priests ^l.” And the Jewish historian Josephus uses the term in both these senses in the very same sentence : “ The High priest paid his court to the High priest ^m.”

§ 6. BUT to return. Though names, in this as in other cases, might be left to gain by customary use an appropriate meaning, we have good ground to believe that there were, from the first, three separate offices of distinct dignity and power ; and that matters were

^k Matth. xxvii. 1, &c.

^l Acts xix. 14.

^m Joseph. Ant. L. xx. c. viii. § 2.

so ordered by an authority which ought to be obeyed. For St. Paul tells us, that " GOD hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachersⁿ." And the pastoral Letters of the same apostle to Timothy and Titus agree with and confirm this account. It appears that Timothy was ordained or consecrated by St. Paul before many witnesses^o; and that, although he was young, he had authority to receive an accusation against an elder or presbyter, and to rebuke publicly such as were faulty^p. He had authority also to ordain ministers^q, and many directions are given him for the discharge of that important trust; whence, among other things, it appears that deacons were to exercise their office some time before they were advanced to a higher degree^r. And to Titus he says, " For this cause left I thee in Crete, that Thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city^s."

ⁿ 1 Cor. xii. 28, 29. Compare Eph. iv. 11. and Acts xiii. 1. Evangelist is a word of like import with Teacher; and Evangelist and Deacon appear to be the same: Acts vi. 5. xxi. 8.

^o 2 Tim. i. 6. 13. ii. 2. 1 Tim. iv. 14.

^p 1 Tim. iv. 12. v. 1. 19, 20. ^q 1 Tim. v. 22.

^r 1 Tim. iii. 13.

^s Tit. i. 5.

§ 7. If the sense of holy Scripture on this head was more doubtful or uncertain than in truth it is, could it be shewn to consist as well with the presbyterian as the episcopal form of a church (which cannot be made out, since one individual, not several co-ordinate presbyters, had a right to ordain;) could this be proved, we must then appeal to that which is the proper evidence of Facts, the testimony of history. How the church really was constituted in any particular age we can only know either by immediate revelation from God, which no one will now pretend to, or by the report of those who lived in that age or near it, and had the best means and opportunity of information.

§ 8. IGNATIUS, "the disciple of St. John, a man in all things like unto the apostles^t," was chosen by them to be bishop of Antioch, where the disciples were first called Christians^u; and he presided over that church forty years. Being conspicuous no less for his piety than his station, he was deemed a proper object for extraordinary punishment. In the year of our Lord 107, eight years after the death of St. John, he

^t Martyrd. of S. Ignatius.

^u Acts xi. 26.

was sentenced by the Emperor in person to be carried in chains to Rome, there to be exposed to wild beasts for the entertainment of the people. On this occasion he wrote epistles to several churches, requesting their prayers for him, that he might suffer like a true disciple of Christ, and exhorting them to unity and perseverance in the faith. From these epistles I shall quote a few passages out of many that might be adduced to our purpose.

§ 9. He says to the Ephesians, " For even Jesus Christ, our inseparable Life, is sent by the will of the Father; as the BISHOPS, *appointed unto the utmost bounds of the earth*, are by the will of Jesus Christ *." In another epistle he says, " I exhort you that ye study to do all things in a divine concord: your Bishop presiding in the place of God; your Presbyters in the place of the council of the Apostles; and your Deacons, most dear to me, being intrusted with the ministry of Jesus Christ; who was with the Father before all ages, and appeared in the end to us †." " He that is within the altar

* Eph. § 3. Wake's Genuine Epistles of the Apostolical Fathers, p. 65.

† Magnesians, § 6. ib. p. 79.

is pure ; but he that is without, that is, that does any thing without the Bishop, and Presbyters, and Deacons, is not pure in his conscience :” “ without These there is no church’.” “ Wherefore let it be your endeavour to partake All of the same holy Eucharist. For there is but One Flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ ; and One Cup, in the unity of his Blood ; One Altar ; as also there is One Bishop, together with his Presbytery, and the Deacons my fellow-servants : that whatsoever ye do, ye may do it according to the will of God².” And towards the close of his epistle to the Smyrneans, he says, “ I salute your very worthy Bishop^a, and your
venerable

¹ Trallians, § 3. 7. p. 88, 89.

² To the Philadelphians, § 4. ib. p. 106.

^a Ib. 119. This “ very worthy bishop” was Polycarp, a disciple of St. John. He was bishop of Smyrna when St. John wrote the Revelation ; and he is consequently the person, to whom, under the character or title of “ the angel of the church in Smyrna,” Christ thus speaks : “ Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer :—be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” Rev. ii. 8—10. The heavenly exhortation was not lost upon him. Having taught his flock with apostolical zeal and prudence upwards of fifty years, when he was seized for examination, and urged by the judge, in order to save his life, to swear and reproach Christ, he replied, “ Eighty and six years have I now served Christ,

venerable Presbytery ; and your Deacons, my fellow-servants ; and all of you in general, and every one in particular, in the name of Jesus Christ. — Grace be with you, and mercy, and peace, and patience, for evermore."

§ 10. It is needless to produce other authorities. But we may observe, that the early writers of ecclesiastical history give an uninterrupted series or list of the bishops of Jerusalem, of Alexandria, of Antioch, and various other churches, down from the apostles' days ; and they do this, in all appearance, with as much ease and certainty, as we could enumerate the bishops of any English diocese since the reign of queen Elizabeth. To this I shall add one remark, which though often advanced has never been rendered doubtful by a probable exception, much less disproved by a clear instance to the contrary. The remark is this : During the first fifteen hundred years from the birth of Christ, there

and he has never done me the least wrong : how then can I blaspheme my King, and my Saviour ?" When threats and intreaties were found equally vain, proclamation was made, that he " confessed himself to be a Christian," and he was committed to the flames ; in the year of our Lord 147. Martyrd. of Polycarp, § 9, &c.

was

was no church upon earth that was not subject to episcopal government. It has indeed been said that the Scots, for some centuries after they embraced Christianity, were without bishops. But the historian^b, who reports this, lived at the distance of a thousand years from the period in question; he quotes no authority for what he says; and other writers of credit give a different account of these remote and obscure times of the Scottish history: so that, upon the whole, our position remains unrefuted,

§ II. ONE circumstance is common to the three orders of the clergy: They all perform their respective functions, not in their own name, but in the name of Christ. This is evident from the New Testament. "Let a man so account of us," St. Paul says, "as of the Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the mysteries of God^c." And again he says, "We are Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us^d." An Ambassador represents and acts for the sovereign who sends him. A Steward is the agent of his proper lord. A Minister or servant is the servant of that master, who hath agreed

^b Buchanan, L. v. ^c 1 Cor. iv. 1. ^d 2 Cor. v. 20.

with him, and appointed him in his household. Those therefore, in whom all these characters unite, must have an appointment also. And therefore the apostle, where he mentions the necessity of such an order of men, declares likewise the necessity of their proper authority and mission: "How shall they [the people] hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be Sent?"

§ 12. THERE are two ways, and apparently only two, whereby the authority of Christ may be derived to his ministers. He may, if it seem good unto him, confer it on them severally, by an immediate gift and declaration of his will to that effect, from heaven: or he may bestow it by means of those, who in successive ages have received and handed it down from the persons, whom he himself, during his abode on earth, constituted to bear his name throughout the world. If we except St. Paul, we do not know that ever any pastor of Christ's church was called and invested with the powers of his office in the former miraculous method. To the ordinary way of passing from hand to hand, as

^c Rom. x. 14, 15.

an estate descends from father to son, our blessed Lord seems to have had an eye, when he gave his solemn commission to the apostles, and added, " Lo, I am with you always^f:" for the power that is always with us, constant and permanent, is not occasional and miraculous.

§ 13. THERE is an obvious and necessary distinction between Ability and Authority, which is too often overlooked. Ability, the mere POWER *of doing any thing*, may be given (if it so please Him, in whom all power dwells) invisibly, or be acquired by secret study, as skill in any particular art; the exercise of the talent will sufficiently shew its reality. But Authority, which is the RIGHT *of doing any thing*, since it may be unjustly assumed, is not therefore proved to be lawful merely by being exercised; it should be given by those who have a *right to confer it*, and, according to the general sense and usage of mankind, it should be delivered in a *public manner*. Whether it be the Chancellor of the realm, the Sheriff of a county, a Justice of the peace, the Mayor of a corporation, or the Constable of a parish, he does not take

^f Matth. xxviii. 20.

the office upon himself; there is some known and regular mode of appointment. The seals or keys of office are put into his hands by those for whom he acts, his name is enrolled in some public record, or an oath of office is administered to him by the proper magistrate: so that his authority does not rest upon his own assertion, but is capable of being proved by the testimony of others; and those whom it concerns may assure themselves, if they choose to inquire, that he is lawfully invested with the powers which he claims.

§ 14. ALMIGHTY God, who graciously endowed man with reason and prudence, vouchsafes to address him as possessing those faculties; and often in His holy word makes direct appeal to them, and calls upon him to use them. If a prophet arise, the performance of miracles or the completion of prophecy, both of them public facts which men can attest, are the proof of his mission. Yet commonly even in the case of prophets sent immediately from God, and always in the instance of persons acting under a divine but not an extraordinary commission, the authority has been bestowed in a way conformable to the customs of men in like cases; a way admitting

admitting of public testimony. A few examples will make this plain.

St. Paul says generally of the Priesthood, "No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron^g." Now by referring to Aaron's appointment, with which the apostle supposes his Hebrew readers to be acquainted, we find that he was "called of God," because Moses, the servant of God, by express command from the Lord, ordained him and his sons to minister unto the Lord in the priest's office, by a public ceremony of consecration that lasted seven days^h. This of course all Israel knew.

St. Paul applies his observation to a higher example: "So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten theeⁱ." If this, which the apostle quotes, was the language of prophecy,

^g Heb. v. 4.

^h See Exod. xxviii. 1. xxix. 1—37. To take away murmurings, his office was afterwards confirmed to him by the miraculous budding of his rod, Numb. xvii. And the Lord commanded that "the stranger that came nigh" to meddle with the priesthood "should be put to death." Numb. xviii. 7. iii. 10. In a like public manner, and by divine command, Moses appointed Joshua to be his successor: Deut. xxxiv. 9.

ⁱ Heb. v. 5. Psal. ii. 7.

a similar

a similar declaration was made in an audible voice from heaven to our blessed Lord, several times during his ministry, and particularly at his baptism, before he began publicly to preach the gospel^k; when also the Holy Spirit visibly descended upon him. Here therefore, again, was a solemn investment with authority, which they who saw and heard could and did attest^l.

When our Lord chose the Twelve and named them Apostles, it was in the presence of many other of his disciples^m. When the apostles appointed a successor in the room of Judas, when they ordained deacons, or elders, or bishops, the business was transacted in the same open manner, in the face of the congregation. So careful (if we may be allowed the expression) has the Almighty ever been to enable us to know, in every age, who they are that bear his name and authority; to whom, in sacred matters, our submission is due.

§ 15. BUT further. As authority should be granted in a public manner, so the act and

^k See Matth. iii. 16, 17. also xvii. 5. John xii. 28. 30.

^l John i. 32—34. v. 37. 2 Pet. i. 17, 18.

^m Luke vi. 13.

form of giving it should point out the nature and extent of the powers conferred. We have not, in any single passage of the Gospels, the formal appointment of the apostles, with a description of their office ; but from a comparison of our Lord's declarations on this head, made at different times as they were prepared to receive them, the outline of their commission is sufficiently evident. They were to preach the gospel ^a, to baptize converts ^o, to administer the Lord's supper ^p, to forgive sins ^q, to separate notorious offenders from the church ^r; to which must be added, that since the church was to endure for ever, but They were not to live for ever, it was implied in the nature of their office, that they were to ordain others, who should fulfil the work of the ministry in their absence, or after their decease. In like manner when our Lord first sent out the Twelve, and when he appointed the Seventy to go two and two before his face, he taught them respectively the business whereupon he sent them ^s.

^a Mark xvi. 15.

^o Matth. xxviii. 19.

^p Luke xxii. 19.

^q John xx. 23.

^r Matth. xvi. 19. xviii. 18. Compare 1 Cor. v. 5. 13.

^s 1 Tim. i. 20.

^s See Matth. x. Luke x.

This

This example of wisdom the apostles followed, in regard to the lowest as well as the highest offices. Accordingly we find, that the deacons, whom they appointed, were to preach the gospel, to baptize, and to assist the apostles in other subordinate parts of their holy function; but Timothy and others were commissioned to ordain elders, and to overlook such as were already ordained, to exhort or to rebuke them^t; and, if there was need, to excommunicate, or cut off from the Christian society^u. And agreeably to these primitive and sacred precedents, in the ordering of deacons and priests, and in the consecration of bishops, by the forms prescribed in the church of England, what appertains to each of those offices is first of all clearly and circumstantially stated; and then, in express words, accompanied with the imposition of hands, authority to execute the said offices respectively is given by the bishop; who, by an unbroken chain and succession of bishops similarly appointed, derives his office and authority from those who were constituted by the apostles, as the apostles were by Christ himself.

^t 2 Tim. ii. 2. iv. 2. 1 Tim. i. 3. iii. 15.

^u Tit. iii. 10.

§ 16. IN civil matters we are sufficiently jealous of all encroachments of power; and if any one takes upon himself authority without due appointment, we call it tyranny or usurpation; and if a person, who is entrusted with authority, exceeds the powers given him, all the acts, which he so does, are deemed illegal, and null, and void. Is sacred authority, either in itself or its consequences, a thing of such inferior weight and consideration, that any bold intruder may seize it to himself? When Korah and his company, sons of Levi, whom the Lord had brought near to himself to do the service of the tabernacle, not content with this honour, aimed at higher powers and sought the priesthood, and had formed a strong party out of the other tribes to support them in their pretensions; to confound such daring projects the Lord made a new thing, and the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and they perished from among the congregation*. When Saul, an anointed king, but not a priest, forced himself and offered a burnt-offering, Samuel said unto him, "Thou hast done foolishly;—thy kingdom shall not continue,—because thou hast not kept that which the Lord com-

* See Numb. xvi.

manded thee *.” In like manner when king Uzziah’s heart was lifted up, and he went into the temple of the Lord to burn incense, Azariah the chief priest withstood him ; and said, “ It appertaineth not unto thee, Uzziah, to burn incense unto the Lord, but to the priests, the sons of Aaron ;—neither shall it be for thine honour from the Lord God.” And he was smitten with leprosy, which continued unto the day of his death †.

§ 17. WHEN Almighty God has by some signal vengeance, commonly in the persons of the first authors, branded for ever any great crime or sin, he does not generally interpose upon every repetition of the offence ; but leaves men, under the ordinary grace of the Holy Spirit, to the light of his written word and recorded judgements, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear. But if he does not destroy every ecclesiastical and civil rebel, as he did Korah and his confederates ; if he does not smite every invader of sacred offices, as he did Uzziah ; if he does not strike every one guilty of lying and sacrilege, as he did Ananias and Sapphira ‡ ; yet

* 1 Sam. xiii. 8—14.

† 2 Chron. xxvi. 16—21.

‡ Acts v.

doubtless

doubtless he has no delight now in these or such like sins, which he so long ago so exemplarily punished. “ If a man exalt himself ^a,” without a public appointment, to be a minister or teacher of the gospel; or if he were publickly appointed by those who in the very act of appointing exceeded their commission, and *exercised authority that was never given them*; in either case there is an infraction and breaking in upon that order, which Christ hath established, and for more than seventeen hundred years preserved in his church. There is no succession, or it is not complete; they hold not of the head; the office, or the authority, or both are assumed; and it is to be feared they too closely resemble those, of whom it is said, “ I have not sent these prophets, yet they ran: I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied ^b.”

§ 18. BUT may not a man have a “ gift” and a “ call” to the ministry without being ordained? This, I fear, is the mistake, by which many sincere Christians deceive themselves and others. When the brazen serpent was perverted to idolatrous purposes, though it was made and set up by Moses at the ex-

^a 2 Cor. xi. 20.

^b Jer. xxiii. 21.

press command of God^c, and was a type of Christ, Hezekiah brake it in pieces, and called it Nehushtan, or bawble^d. No one, I fear, possesses a similar power over words: we can neither stop their currency, nor prevent their abuse; but it is greatly to be wished, that the terms now mentioned were either never used in speaking of religious subjects, or only in the sense affixed to them in Scripture. All the faculties we enjoy, whether of soul or body, we thankfully acknowledge to be the gifts of God. But these ordinary graces, these natural or moral or religious endowments, are not what is intended by those who talk of a person being “gifted,” or having a “gift.” They mean some peculiar and extraordinary power, very little if at all less than miraculous. Now admitting the talent, whatever it be, to be in the fullest sense miraculous and from heaven; it is very doubtful whether even such a gift, privately and invisibly bestowed, ever authorised any one to be a minister of the gospel. We know when the apostles wanted assistants in their daily ministration, the men they required for the purpose were such as were already “full of the Holy Ghost, and of

^c Numb. xxi. 8, 9.

^d 2 Kings xviii. 4.
wisdom.”

wisdom." But this fulness of the Spirit and of wisdom, which rendered them fit and worthy to be entrusted with an office, gave them however, in the apostles' judgement, no authority to perform even the lowest functions of the church ; till They had, by prayer and imposition of hands, solemnly appointed them over the business^e.

But not to insist on this, if an extraordinary endowment and commission are pretended, they should be proved, as all such divine missions have been, by miracles, or by prophecy ; and when he who stands up to teach in the name of Christ, shall thus establish his authority, we will readily revere him, though without human appointment, as the minister and messenger of God ; yet with this single but necessary limitation : Provided he does not preach any other gospel than what we have received ; for should this be attempted, even by an angel from heaven, the apostle does not scruple to pronounce him accursed^f.

§ 19. BUT there seems to be a kind of secret persuasion, which indeed is sometimes avowed, that the mere faculty of speaking

^e Acts vi. 1—6.

^f Gal. i. 8, 9.

fluently and well, without the help of notes, in praying or preaching, is in itself a sufficient proof, that it is, in an eminent sense, an “ability which God giveth² ;” and consequently that the person, thus distinguished by God, is authorised and sent by him. But is it considered, how much this would prove, did it really prove any thing? Our senators in parliament and lawyers at the bar speak extempore. The ministers of the church of Rome speak extempore. The teachers among the Dissenters of every denomination, in this country and abroad, speak extempore. Now the faculty being the same in all these and many more, it is in all, or in none, a divine inspiration.

§ 20. WE lay claim to no supernatural endowments; and we think it consists not with God’s ordinary grace and providence to operate without means, but rather to bless us in the diligent use of the means that He furnishes. He does not generally make us wise or good in a moment without our concurrence; but he crowns with success our humble but earnest endeavours to attain wisdom, and to advance in holiness. We find that

St. Paul, favoured as he was with abundant revelations, and engaged with the care of all the churches^h, did not however neglect booksⁱ; and he exhorts Timothy, distinguished as he also was by extraordinary powers, to give attendance to reading, and presses the matter with as much solicitude, as he could well be supposed to have done, were the proficiency that he hoped for, in this his “dearly beloved son,” to be entirely the fruit of his own application^k. And it will be difficult to prove that the aid and blessing of the Holy Spirit may not be vouchsafed to a clergyman, in the calm and devout study of the word of God, and in composing a discourse for the edification of his flock, and in the delivery of it also, as fully and effectually, as to another who prays or preaches either with or without premeditation.

§ 21. IN regard to that other much injured word, a Call, it denotes, if we apprehend it rightly, in the language of many Christians of the present day, *an invisible operation of the Holy Ghost upon the soul*; of

^h 2 Cor. xii. 7. xi. 28.

ⁱ 2 Tim. iv. 13.

^k See 1 Tim. iv. 13—16. 2 Tim. i. 2.

which we will not now dispute either the reality or the efficacy ; but be it ever so certain, ever so powerful, we have seen¹ that there is abundant reason to doubt whether in itself it be a sufficient warrant to any one to commence public teacher. It may be one of the qualifications requisite for the due performance of such an office, but does not of itself give the office. But here lies the misfortune respecting the word in question : because the scriptural call is such as does confer authority, it is hastily concluded that therefore the modern call, a thing widely different, gives authority also.

§ 22. THE words Call, Calling, Called, as used by the inspired writers of the New Testament, in passages at all relating to the present subject, denote *audible sounds* ; something which others, as well as the party concerned, can hear and attest. Inward grace may sometimes be supposed or included in the expressions ; but the outward means are what is primarily and directly intended : there are *words spoken and heard*. So the Gentiles were *called*^m to the Christian faith by the *preaching* of the apostles, whose “ Sound went into all

¹ P. 100.

^m 1 Thess. ii. 12. 2 Thess. ii. 14.

the earth, and their Words unto the ends of the worldⁿ." So St. Paul was called to be an apostle^o (if he alludes to his miraculous conversion) by a Voice from heaven, which they that journeyed with him heard^p, in common with himself, attended also with a manifestation of glory, which They likewise saw^q. And afterwards he was separated for the work of an apostle by public prayer and imposition of hands, at the special command of the Holy Ghost^r. So likewise, to give one instance more, our Lord *called* the Twelve, first of all separately to be his disciples, and then collectively to be his apostles, by the words of his own blessed lips, uttered in the presence and hearing of many^s.

§ 23. IN conformity with this language and these examples, we humbly trust, that the bishops, and priests, and deacons of our church "are," as they individually declare their persuasion in their ordination, "truly called according to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ^t;" because the several parts of the

ⁿ Rom. x. 18. ^o Rom. i. 1. 1 Cor. i. 1. Gal. i. 15.

^p Acts ix. 7. ^q Acts xxii. 9. ^r Acts xiii. 1—3.

^s Matth. iv. 18—22. with Mark i. 16—20. Matth. x. 1. with Mark iii. 13—15. Luke vi. 13.

^t See the Form of ordaining Deacons, &c.

business

business are publicly and properly transacted, and the appointment itself is given them respectively in a form of sound words, by those who derive their office and authority, in a regular line of descent, from the hands of the apostles. And if, when they are about to be admitted into the ministry, they have a sincere desire "to serve God for the promoting of his glory, and the edifying of his people," this doubtless, as every other good desire and resolution, is the effect of divine grace; and they may therefore profess their "trust," as they do on that occasion, "that they are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them that office and ministration."

CHAPTER V.

Conclusion.

§ 1. AND now upon the whole, what remains, but that we intreat and “ beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation.” If the clergyman, entrusted in the name of Jesus Christ with the care of all the souls in his parish, is bound, at the peril of his soul, to warn all and to admonish all; are They, on their part, exempt from blame and secure from danger, should they neglect or refuse to hear? “ If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies;—be ye like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”

§ 2. WEAK and fallible we all confess ourselves; but this perhaps, like many another truth that is often in our lips, has not always its full effect on our life and conver-

^u Heb. xiii. 22.

^w Phil. ii. 1, 2.

fation.

sation. The errors of others, great and palpable, we readily see; but do we duly consider whether our own notions are well or ill founded? It is much to be wished that those who differ from us would impartially and deliberately examine these two points: First, whether indeed they have truth on their side, whether their doctrines are really countenanced by holy Scripture and the primitive church: and Secondly, if, upon full and fair inquiry, they find or believe themselves to be right, whether after all they are *excusable* in leaving the establishment. For if they might stay without sin, they are certainly guilty of sin in departing; otherwise all the ardent exhortations of the blessed apostles to unity, and all their rebukes and denunciations against those who cause divisions, are mere idle words; incitements to diligence where there is no duty, censures where there is no error, threats where there is no guilt.

§ 3. Now what are the points in dispute, I do not say between us and the church of Rome, for there, as we sincerely lament, the very terms of communion being sinful, one half of the Lord's supper being withheld from the people, and the other half being
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perverted and adored*, we were obliged to come out of her. But what are the matters

* Since the first part of this tract was printed, I have been informed, that many Roman Catholics at present maintain, that in the Mass the bread is changed, not into the flesh of Christ, but into his spiritual body. This alters, but does not at all lessen, the absurdity. There are still two miracles; and the second is wrought, as far as we can judge, for no other imaginable reason, but to defeat the first, and impose upon our senses. For if the bread is really changed into the very body of Christ, whether it be his fleshly or spiritual body, all the benefits derivable from eating that body could not but attend it as well and as fully, if it *appeared* to our senses to be that body, as now that it is asserted *to be* that body, but confessedly *does not appear* to be. Besides, in addition to the contradictions of the common hypothesis, there are some obvious absurdities peculiar to this notion of the transubstantiation of the bread into Christ's spiritual body. For in this view, when our Lord instituted this blessed sacrament, the bread was converted into his spiritual body *before his spiritual body, as such, had any existence*; for at that time "Jesus was not yet glorified." John vii. 39. On this supposition also there is no corresponding substance for the element of wine to be changed into. For St. Paul teaches us that the resurrection body, glorified humanity, will not consist of flesh and blood: 1 Cor. xv. 50. and such as our body shall be, such is now the "glorious body" of Christ our Redeemer. Phil. iii. 21. Surely, surely, into whatever shape ingenuity may torture transubstantiation, those who assert it deceive themselves as well as others, and do not really believe, even when they affirm they do, this terrific and portentous doctrine.

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in debate between us and Protestant Dissenters of such denominations as are alluded to in the foregoing pages? whether the blessed eucharist shall be received before noon, or after noon, sitting or kneeling; whether baptism shall be administered by putting the body into water, or by pouring water upon the body; whether the parents or friends of the party to be baptized shall answer for him; whether prayers shall be offered up in the language of the moment, or in words composed beforehand. Are these things and such as these, not to mention others if possible still less important, fit to rend in sunder that body of Christ, for the Unity whereof he so fervently prayed to the Father^v; and of which, accordingly, we are repeatedly told in holy Scripture, that it is, and ought to be, but One?

§ 4. St. Paul says to the Galatians, “ If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing^z.” Yet this same Paul, that he might not give offence to the Jews, “ took and circumcised Timothy^a.” In modern days what vehement outcries would this have raised against a church, whose doctrine and discipline (as it would in that case have been

^v See John xvii. 11. 21—23. ^z Gal. v. 2. ^a Acts xvi. 3.
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urged) were so much at variance? And yet the apostle, no doubt, both acted and spoke with wisdom; doing that on a particular occasion, which under different circumstances he disapproved.

In common life, to quarrel about trifles is deemed a mark of folly, and an aggravation of the offence. Is it wise, or is it innocent, in a business regarding our eternal welfare, that harmony should be broken by, and schism originate in, frivolous complaints, or matters of indifference?

§ 5. INFANT baptism indeed is a point of very serious moment. Of baptism in general, without any limitation of Age in those to be baptized, we are taught in holy Scripture, that it is the appointed means for the remission of sins; and therefore necessary, where it may be had, for attaining salvation. And from the history of Christ's church there is as little reason to doubt that infants have been baptized, in every age and in every country, from the apostles' days to this hour, as there is room in our own history to question whether Henry VIIIth was once king of England. Yet there is so much evil every way in divisions, and, on the ground of holy writ, submission to those who in spiritual matters

matters have rule over us is so plain a duty, that, I fear, it is very questionable indeed, whether even this difference in regard to baptism (were the opinion of the Anabaptists as clearly right as it is certainly erroneous) is a justifiable plea for separation. We are not "lords over God's heritage^b," to constrain obedience; but watchmen to guard, ambassadors to intreat: and if, notwithstanding all that can be said in so plain a case, any one still retains invincible doubts, and, in consequence of those doubts, keeps his child away from the sacred font, we would very gladly baptize, at any age from four to fourscore, the person who has not been baptized before. Why then should they, on account even of this important article, quit the church, with which, in all other fundamental points of doctrine, they entirely agree?

§ 6. "MEN's opinions," you say, "differ like their faces." Very true; but if you approve of the allusion, follow it. What is the difference in question? Does it not lie in a narrow compass? Amidst the general diversity there is a general resemblance; so that you never, even in its homeliest form, mistake

^b 1 Pet. v. 3.

the "human face divine" for the countenance of an ox, of a lion, or a monkey. Original endowments, acquired talents, difference of occupation, and a thousand other circumstances create a variety in men's notions and sentiments; but then this variety has its limits. It does not extend to plain facts, or known truths: it regards the features of duty, rather than the duties themselves. No man doubts whether fire will burn, whether two and two make four, whether parents are to be honoured, or the Almighty adored. And every establishment ought to be, at least our own is, founded on so broad a basis, that there is room for numberless and in themselves inconsistent opinions to be entertained, without violating in the smallest degree the unity of faith.

To illustrate this remark I will give a single instance, which may be applied to many others. Our church says, agreeably to the Athanasian and the apostles' creed, "it is to be believed, that Christ went down into hell^c;" but she has, I think, no where explained in what sense this Article is to be understood; whether 1. generally of the region or place of departed souls; or 2. of the place where the

^c Art. iii.

souls of the faithful are in joy and felicity ; or 3. of the place where wicked souls are in misery. Notwithstanding therefore it is clear from holy Scripture, that the first, or, if you choose to distinguish, the second is the sense, in which the Article and the creeds ought to be understood ; yet if any one should take the descent into hell, as some have, in the third sense, he might, so far as the church is concerned, safely join in repeating the creeds, and, if there was occasion, safely subscribe the Articles ^d.

§ 7. It is, I hope, no unreasonable compliment to the appointed ministers of the gospel, to suppose them intitled to as much respect at least as the scribes and Pharisees in the days of our blessed Saviour ; and to Them, on account of their public character and

^d It has been said that the word Hell was never used formerly but for the place of torments. But this is a mistake, as the following passage, out of many that might be produced, clearly shews : “ Have minde now of twey manner of Helles : in that one were Adam, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and other holy forfaders that dyed byfore Cryft ; into that helle Crist descended after his passion.—The other helle is a place for them that be and shal be dampned for evermore.” Caxton’s Polychron. l. vi. c. viii. printed A. D. 1482.

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office, our Lord peremptorily enjoins very strict attention : “ The scribes and Pharisees *sit in Moses’ seat.* All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that observe and do.*” And when He committed to his apostles^c, and through them to their successors, the keys and government of his kingdom, he by consequence made it the duty of those who should believe on him, to obey the authority which he thus ordained. He also gave this solemn charge on the subject : “ If he (thy brother) neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican ^f.” The conduct of the apostles was agreeable to the tenour of these instructions. They command, that honour, and esteem, and obedience should be paid to the pastors of Christ’s flock^g; and urge the concurring example of the churches as a very powerful argument for decency, uniformity, and order. Thus, to produce one instance out of many, St. Paul decides a controversy in this authoritative manner : “ *We* (the apostles) have no such custom” (a consideration of itself sufficient, surely, to end the dispute; but he goes on, as if he had a stronger reason still to

^c Matth. xxiii. 2, 3.

^f Matth. xviii. 17.

^g 1 Tim. v. 17. 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. Heb. xiii. 17.

allege;) "*We have no such custom, neither the Churches of God^h.*"

§ 8. IT is not indeed necessary, that the churches of different nations should, in every minute circumstance, be altogether similarⁱ. Agreeing in essentials, they may allowably vary in outward ceremonies and matters of decorum: in such case, the members of either, as they have opportunity, may join, as was the practice of the primitive Christians, in communion with the other, with mutual edification and perfect charity. But in one and the same country, it doubtless is not the will of the Almighty, that there should be any diversity, even in customs and forms; for He "is not the Author of confusion, but" of unity, of order, and "of peace^k."

§ 9. OUR blessed Lord, knowing as he did what was in man, yet " marvelled because of the unbelief" of his countrymen. And as we can never cease lamenting, so neither can we well, though warned by His example,

^h 1 Cor. xi. 16. See also ver. 22. vii. 17. and x. 32. xiv. 33. xvi. 1. 1 Theff. ii. 14. and our Lord's precept, Matth. xviii. 17.

ⁱ See xxxix Articles, art. xxxiv.

^k 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

^l Mar. vi. 6.

cease wondering at, the divisions among Christians. It was foretold indeed, both by our Lord and his apostles, that such things would happen: "It must needs be that offences come^m:" "If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receiveⁿ:" "There must be also heresies among you^o:" "The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they *heap to themselves teachers*, having itching ears^p." But although these things which are written have been abundantly fulfilled, yet the crime of causing dissensions and heresies, like all other crimes, is voluntary in the authors. For which reason our blessed Saviour denounces "woe" against "that man by whom the offence cometh^q." And St. Paul says a heretic is "condemned of himself^r:" and he reckons "heresies," as well as "strife" and "seditions," among the "works of the flesh^s."

§ 10. IN one respect the Methodists are much to be commended; because in general they attend very constantly the service of the

^m Matth. xviii. 7.

ⁿ John v. 43.

^o 1 Cor. xi. 19.

^p 2 Tim. iv. 3.

^q Matth. xviii. 7.

^r Tit. iii. 10, 11.

^s Gal. v. 19, 20.

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church. If they persevere in this good practice, if with humble sincerity they wait for God's mercies in the midst of his temple[†], there is reason to hope they will be enabled to see the fault, or more properly, the sin, of their separate meetings and self-authorised teachers. But if they leave the establishment, it is greatly to be feared they will wander, as others in like circumstances have done, into still more deplorable and dangerous errors.

§ 11. It is matter of surprise and of sorrow, that men often appear to have least judgement where their chief interest is at stake. If legal advice is wanted, you do not consult the husbandman or mechanic, in preference to the sages of the law, who by much reading and daily practice are well versed in that noble science. When a house is to be built, or a field to be tilled, you do not employ those who have no experience in building, or never saw a plough. But if life is in danger by some severe disease, multitudes may be found who will seek for aid, not to the physician of deep knowledge and approved skill in the art of healing, but to those

[†] Psal xlviii. 8. O. V.

who have nothing but impudence and ignorance to recommend them. And in spiritual affairs and the care of the soul, there are many who desert or despise their appointed guides, and confide in those "teachers," who, not having been trained by a proper course of study, understand very little either "what they say, or whereof they affirm." It is true that what is necessary to be believed and done in order to salvation may be easily learnt, if the learner is not perplexed by perverse or injudicious teaching. But to know thoroughly, and to be able to teach accurately, even these great and leading points, and still more to comprehend the whole system and extent of theology, the most arduous of all sciences, is a task that requires not only the knowledge of the original languages of the holy Scriptures, but likewise an exact acquaintance with the history of the church, and at least a general insight into various other arts and sciences.

§ 12. BUT the apostles of Christ, you say, were "unlearned and ignorant men." Admit, if you please, that this charge of their Enemies was in the fullest sense true; but

" 1 Tim. i. 7.

" Acts iv. 13.

let those who are their Friends, consider well the whole of their character. They were taught by our blessed Lord himself several years; they were endowed by him with heavenly wisdom and miraculous powers, and solemnly appointed to preach the gospel, and build up the church. What then will Their example avail those, who have received no such instruction, are possessed of no miraculous gifts, have no public appointment, or not a just one? Is there no fear, in these days, of that evil, which St. Peter even in his time lamented, that the “*unlearned and unstable* wrest the epistles of the beloved brother Paul, and the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction *?”

§ 13. HE who endowed man with a reasonable soul, deals with him according to the nature he formed. By memory we acquire the best part of our knowledge: a prayer therefore is given us, that we should remember and use it. The young as well as old are bound to worship God: the prayer therefore is short and easy, that the infant may learn it; it is abundant in meaning, more than the wise can fully comprehend. By

* 2 Pet. iii. 15, 16.

memory, that is, by a precomposed form, *the way which God himself hath recommended*, perhaps we all of us pray so as best pleases Him, and therefore most to our own benefit. But of this, surely, there can be no doubt, that the infant must be taught this as he is taught other things; and will pray with more advantage in words known and remembered, than in new and therefore less known words daily suggested to him.

§ 14. THERE is in all men a love and veneration for antiquity; and this honest partiality the inspired writers endeavour to lay hold of, when they exhort us to ask for the ancient paths, the good old ways^y. But novelty, so delightful and often beneficial in human operations, is by some sought for, where it can have no place, in the divine counsels. An imparted religion cannot be mended; and truth, like its blessed Author, changeth not.

In his earlier dispensations, He who seeth "the end from the beginning" had an eye to those that were to come after; and framed subsequent ordinances to correspond with antecedent usages and figures. When he gave

^y See Jer. vi. 16, xviii. 15.

Israel a law by the hand of Moses, the Sabbath, consecrated from the creation of the world as a day of religious rest, was retained and enforced ; Sacrifices, appointed probably by divine command immediately after the fall, were continued, with the addition only of new and express regulations ; and Circumcision, which was the seal of the covenant made with Abraham, became the seal also of the Mosaic covenant.

In like manner when Christ, the end of the law, appeared, there was in the new covenant, of which he was the Mediator, similar regard paid to former revelations and ancient institutions. Here again the Sabbath, its Jewish rigour abated², and transferred to a new day in memory of new blessings, was retained in its main substance, as a day of holy worship. Instead of the painful rite of circumcision, the easy ceremony of baptism, a custom, as we have seen, of early use among the Jews, was adopted ; and in the room of sacrifices, the single sacrament of the Lord's supper was ordained, partaking of the nature of those sacrifices, and combining and enhancing all their beneficial effects ; bearing the same view and relation now to the offer-

² Col. ii. 16.

ing of the body of Christ once made upon the cross, as the sacrifices of old did to the same precious offering afterwards to be made. In fine, there are now, as formerly, three great festivals, and a triple priesthood. And thus the law was, as the Scripture informs us, a shadow of things to come^a, the Jewish sacraments types of ours, and the Jewish temple a figure of the church. But if the shadow is like the substance, the substance in turn corresponds with the shadow, and types and figures answer to the things represented.

Such has hitherto been the divine economy, carrying on through all ages one uniform plan of man's redemption, adapting what succeeds to what went before, and gradually advancing it to higher excellence; and we are not sure that the progression is yet ended! It may be true, as many passages in holy writ seem to intimate, that the church militant bears resemblance to the church triumphant, and things on earth are still patterns of things in heaven!

§ 15. WHETHER this is so will one day be known. In the mean time, of this we are certain, for St. Paul has taught us,

^a Heb. x. 1.

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“ There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all ^b.” Whence it is our duty, as the same apostle teaches, “ with one mind and one mouth to glorify God ^c.” Therefore to pass from St. Paul to his fellow labourer Clement, of whom he testifies that his name is in the book of life ^d, “ Happy shall we be, Beloved, if we shall have fulfilled the commandments of God in the Unity of Love; that so, through Love, our sins may be forgiven us—through Jesus Christ our Lord, To whom be Glory for ever and ever, Amen ^e.”

^b Ephes. iv. 4—6. ^c Rom. xv. 6. ^d Phil. iv. 3.

^e S. Clement's Ep. to the Corinthians, § 50.



F I N I S.